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LOVE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

BV
4639
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1929

BY

JAMES MOFFATT

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IN UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON
ST. PAUL'S HOUSE
WARWICK SQUARE
E.C.
4

First published . . . *October* 1929
Reprinted . . . . . . *December* 1929
Reprinted . . . . . . *May* 1930
Reprinted . . . . . . *October* 1930

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TO

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quos ego diligo in ueritate,
et non ego solus.

"It was not from the time when we were reconciled to Him by the blood of His Son that He began to love us; He loved us from the foundation of the world. . . . Let not the fact of our reconciliation to God through the death of His Son be so interpreted as to mean that when the Son reconciled us to Him, then He began to love those whom He had formerly hated, in the same way as foe is reconciled to foe, so that thereafter they become friends, and mutual love replaces enmity; nay, we were reconciled to Him who already loved us."—St. Augustine: *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus*, cx. 6 (fifth century).

"I saw full surely that ere God made us He loved us; which love was never slacked, nor ever shall be. And in this love He hath done all His works; and in this love He hath made all things profitable to us; and in this love our life is everlasting. In our making we had beginning; but the love wherein He made us was in Him from without beginning: in which love we have our beginning. And all this shall we see in God, without end."—Lady Julian of Norwich: *Revelations of Divine Love*, lxxxvi. (fourteenth century).

"To be humble in conduct, stedfast in faith, modest in speech, just in action, merciful in deeds . . . to love God with all one's heart, to be in love with Him as Father, to revere Him as God, to prefer nothing whatsoever to Christ, since he preferred nothing to us, to adhere inseparably to his love, to stand by his cross bravely and loyally . . . this is to be fellow-heirs with Christ, this is to do what God commands, this is to fulfil the Father's will."—St. Cyprian: *De Dominica Oratione*, xv. (third century).

"Assuredly faith marks Him out to be loved all the more as I understand He is to be valued far above myself—I who hold that He has bestowed on me not only mine own self but Himself indeed. Ere ever the age of faith had arrived, ere ever God had become known in the flesh, died on the cross, come forth from the tomb, and returned to the Father—ere ever indeed He had commended His great love toward us, man had been already commanded to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, that is, with all he is, with all he knows, and with all he can do. Nor was God unjust in claiming for Himself His own work and gifts. For how shall the work not love the Worker, when it has power so to do? And why not wholly, when it can do nothing at all save by His gift? Moreover, that it has been made out of nothing, made freely, and made so noble, renders the debt of love more plain, and shows the justice of the demand more clearly. . . . O my God, my Helper, I would love Thee according to Thy gift, and in my measure—less than Thy just due indeed, but surely not less than I am able."—St. Bernard: *Liber de diligendo Deo*, v.–vi. (twelfth century).

"When pagans hear from our lips the oracles of God, they marvel at their beauty and greatness; afterwards, when they discover that our actions are not worthy of our utterances, they betake themselves to blasphemy, declaring that it is all myth and delusion. When they hear from us that God says, 'It is no credit to you if you love those who love you, but it is a merit to you if you love your enemies and those who hate you'—when they hear that, they marvel at such surpassing kindness; but when they see that we fail to love not only those who hate us but even those who love us, then they deride us, and God's Name is blasphemed."—*The Second Epistle of Clement*, xiii. (second century).

"Thy love for a friend should be grounded in Me, and for My sake shouldest thou love anyone who seems to thee good and right dear in this life. Without Me friendship thrives not and will not endure; nor is that love true and pure which is not knit by Me."—*De Imitatione Christi*, iii. 42 (fifteenth century).

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INTRODUCTION

MEN speak of Christianity as the religion of love, commonly without feeling any need of examining their terms. Yet the phrase may become inaccurate and even misleading by its very vagueness. ‘ Love ’ is a great dictionary word, and in the religious vocabulary of the world Christianity has been identified with it so loosely that it is well to ask what this definition or description really means, and how far it is true. We require to scrutinize the received opinions about love. For example, *God is love*, in the NT, is a religious conviction, though this is often forgotten. It may stir moral and metaphysical problems for the philosophy of religion, problems which either shake and upset the conviction or on the other hand uphold it in the minds of thoughtful worshippers ; but the conviction does not rise out of such considerations. The love of God, like His holiness, is revealed not in His being but in His purpose, in His attitude and action towards men ; in religion all depends on what the God is to whom the term ‘ love ’ is thus applied, and for the NT, in the wake of the OT religion, it is what God does that reveals what He is. This God is a God who has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ His Son in self-sacrificing love for the sake of life to His own on earth : *God is love*, and *this is how the love of God has appeared for us, by God sending his only Son into the world, so that by him we might live*. The highest form known to us of self-sacrificing love is thus used to interpret God's love to man, as well as to interpret the supreme form of the human love stirred in response—*and we ought to lay down our lives for the brotherhood*. Yet even this is not by itself adequate, for such self-sacrifice, noble as it always is, may not fully bring out what the Christian understands by the divine love. It does not require very much observation to realize that life may be sacrificed, owing to a generous but casual impulse. There are instances of a man laying down his life to save that of another, without acting from love in the sense of conscious, deliberate affection ; a fair example is to be seen in the last chapter of George Meredith's novel *Beauchamp's Career*. Similarly with brotherly love. The term 'love' may be used of the tie that unites those who share common birth and blood in a nation ; they have affinities which bind them together in a closer bond than they recognize to outsiders. Furthermore, to share common interests or tastes may produce a liking for people which is described as 'love.' Such usages of the term cannot be carried over into religion without misconception. And neither can the love which is romantic and tender, between man and woman, however much this experience throws light upon the divine love. No one can misunderstand the passion which leads a writer like Mark Rutherford[1] to describe the affection of a wife for her commonplace, misunderstood husband by comparing it with God's love from which it streamed. "If I were to think that my wife's devotion to me is nothing more than the simple expression of a necessity to love somebody, that there is nothing in me which justifies such devotion, I should be miserable. Rather, I take it, is the love of woman to man a revelation of the relationship in which God stands to him—of what *ought* to be, in fact. In the love of a woman to a man who is of no account God has provided us with a true testimony of what is in His own heart. . . . The love of woman is, in other words, a living witness never failing of an actuality in God which otherwise we should never know." This is a healthy and natural inference, which might well base itself on the apostle's words, *love is of God*, whether or not such deductions were present to the mind of the NT writer. But love between man and woman is not always of this type, and owing to sentimental associations the interpretation of God's love from this particular angle has been responsible for many unwholesome misconceptions, in fact, we may say, for the majority of such misconceptions.

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[1] *Deliverance*, pp. 108, 109.

Shelley began one of his lyrics by protesting to a woman whom he loved,

> One word is too often profaned
> For me to profane it.

And the word was 'love,' as between man and woman. Similarly, after reviewing some tracts of mediaeval and of modern Christianity, we may be disposed to think that here also this word has been too often profaned at certain periods, and by certain temperaments; few observers would be prepared to deny that it has been allowed to carry over into religion some of its sexual and sentimental associations, to the detriment of reverence and moral severity. 'Love' is too good and great a term to be dropped, simply because it has been thus profaned in the vocabulary of religion or of theology; yet if it is to be retained it ought to be redefined. Coleridge thought that the decay of the term in English literature coincided with the vogue of Sterne's sentimentalism. Then it was, he argues, that "the profanation of the word Love rose to its height. The French naturalists, Buffon and others, borrowed it from the sentimental novelists: the Swedish and English philosophers took the contagion." Coleridge is referring to love of the sexes, however, which, he insists, "lays claim to permanence only under the form of duty."[1] As applied to Christianity, the term was profaned much earlier, as early indeed as the period when the love-idea was used, often with beauty and power, to interpret religion in the hymn-book called 'The

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[1] *Aids to Reflection* ('On Sensibility').

Odes of Solomon' during the second century, as later within St. Bernard's writings, in Zinzendorf, in Samuel Rutherford, and elsewhere. The allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon was at once a cause and an effect of this tendency. During the age of chivalry, for example, the love of man for woman took a semi-religious form, and employed semi-religious language to express its adoration, and on the other side Christianity became infected with subtly misleading ideas called up by 'love,' associations of sentimentalism, jealousy, desire, and rivalry, till the devotional life in certain quarters became almost a philandering with God. Even in some of the nobler mediaeval mystics the details of the soul's relationship to God are worked out with a luscious suggestiveness which creates moral aversion in any healthy nature. This type of personal religion is not indeed confined to any one age or to any one Church. It meets us even in Catherine of Siena, as well as in some German pietists of the seventeenth century. We can trace it down to Coventry Patmore, to go no lower. Obviously, as personal religion sought to avoid the rarefied air on the peaks of pantheism, it was often tempted to linger within the warm gardens of a refined sensuousness, until some ranges of Christian literature became tainted with much the same atmosphere as had crept into Persian or Arabic religious writings. For Islam, like the Latin Church, threw up growths of love-mysticism[1]; the Sufis like the Indian songs of Kabir, correspond to the type with which we are familiar in some Spanish mystics, in Henry Suso, and in occasional dubious dreams of later mysticism.

It is, therefore, timely to readjust our estimate of Christian love by examining the classical standards as presented in the NT literature. This is what I mean by 'Love in the

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[1] An eighth-century woman-saint of Sufism is sympathetically described by Miss Margaret Smith in *Rabia the Mystic and her Fellow-Saints in Islam* (1928), especially pp. 88 f.

New Testament.' In two directions the inquiry seems to be specially needful at the present day. (*a*) Some detach 'God is love' from the context, and regard this either as the statement of a cosmic principle or as a complete definition of Christianity in itself. Those who take the former line are not always theists indeed, for love as the cosmic principle may be worked out by thinkers who, like Dr. McTaggart in his *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology* (pp. 282 f.), sit loose to definite religion. Those who take the other line are often warmly Christian, but they fail to see that to refer such a truth to the inner light or to vague intuitions is to elaborate a cut flower. It is all very well, for example, to assert the vital spirit of Christian love as against formal creeds of the past. We may sympathize with the feeling which prompts these lines :

I reverence old-time faith and men,
But God is near us now as then ;
His force of love is still unspent,
His hate of sin as imminent ;
And still the measure of our needs
Outgrows the cramping bounds of creeds.

But to speak of God's force of love is in itself a credo, a tremendous creed. However little help past creeds may seem to give to a believer in Love, such a faith does require an appreciation of the historical revelation in which Love Divine once met and mastered the untoward facts of sin and death. Otherwise, such a faith is apt to be in the air. Indeed, one of the surprising results yielded by any close examination of Christianity as revealed in the NT literature is that apart from the redeeming action of the Lord Jesus Christ the early Church evidently saw no ground whatsoever for believing in a God of love. Again (*b*), there is a tendency to isolate brotherly love and to concentrate upon that as the essence of Christianity, as though the ethical message could be detached from the religious basis with which it is organically connected in the NT. Thus, to quote Dr. McTaggart again, at the sombre close of his book on *Some Dogmas of Religion* (p. 270), in summing up the possible losses to mankind, if belief in God be abandoned, he consoles himself by arguing that whilst there will be one person less to love, "there are other persons to love. And the non-existence of God would leave it as possible as it was before that love should be the central fact of all reality." This is an assurance for which it is not easy, in the light of actual life or of the NT, to see very secure grounds. Some, who would not be prepared to go as far as Dr. McTaggart, seem inclined, on practical rather than upon philosophical grounds, to stress the ethic of brotherly love in the social gospel without attaching very much importance to the religious context in which the NT definitely roots it, arguing that vital, ethical elements may well be detached from an ancient religion whose theology is unacceptable. So far as their programme is religious, it dilutes and dissipates the love of God into a vague sentiment about God as the Father of men because He is their Creator. For this, as we shall see, the NT offers no encouragement whatever. Neither does it contemplate love as an abstract idea. "To whom shall I go to learn about my Beloved? Kabir says, 'As you never may find the forest if you ignore the tree, so He may never be found in abstractions.'"[1] This is spoken of the bhakti-worshipper, and it is ten times true of the Christian love of God. What marks off Christianity is not the conviction that men have discovered a new depth in love divine, but that something has happened, something which has revealed that love in a new scope and reach. For the realization of this, let us confess at the outset,

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[1] *Songs of Kabir* (translated by Rabindranath Tagore), p. 136. Kabir is the Indian reformer of the fifteenth century who voiced the mystical religion of a rapturous love (see below).

Christians were deeply indebted to the tradition of Hebrew religion. It was an inheritance which helped them in two special ways. The conception of the 'Covenant' as the bond between God and His people which involved His entrance into human life and history with a purpose of loving grace, made it possible to believe that the process of time could embrace a Divine Act of eternal significance. Human life was not a mere drift; history was not an illusive series of happenings, too unsubstantial for a decisive Deed to be done among and for mankind. Furthermore, there were prophetic hopes and hints of a redemptive value attaching to the sufferings of the good, and even of atonement for sin being made through the loving obedience and spiritual agony of a Servant whose rôle was in a deep sense ethical. It was the grasp of such truths that enabled the primitive Church to understand the divine love as more than illustrated in the life of Jesus, and as something determinative of human destiny. When they were ignored, either through a depreciation of the OT or through an imperfect appreciation of the historical Jesus, love was either replaced by categories of substance or it tended to become a subject for abstract reverie or speculative theosophy; thereby it lost its distinctive quality, even when Christian phrases were still employed to describe its functions.

It is not the object of this sketch to discuss such adaptations or evaporations of Christianity, but to examine the data of the NT, in order to understand accurately how and why Christianity may be called the religion, or a religion, of love. Naturally, one does not argue that the NT expressions of love, either from God to man or from man to God, are final, in the sense of being the only possible expressions. This would be to depreciate many forms of that saintly love of which history yields such a variety among men and women of all races and ages. The story of the Church has flowered with countless growths of adoration, for which there is neither analogy nor precedent in the NT. Yet some of these remind us of religion rather than of Christianity. More than one of them, for all their colour and fragrance, seem, like Virgil's mistletoe—

> Fronde virere nova, quod non sua seminat arbos,

even although they do cling to the Tree of Life. The ultra-ascetic ambition, for example, to attain a mystical knowledge of God's love by bodily austerities, or the companion attempt to induce such an experience by stripping oneself of ideas as well as of emotions, till the soul reclines on the 'bosom of the Infinite,' or, again, the belief which flourished in some quarters of Latin theology during the middle ages, that the Virgin Mary was required to waken the love of God or of Christ for sinful man—these and other developments have no root in the Christianity of the NT, and therefore are to be viewed as foreign growths. It is in such a light that one studies the NT—not to discover a ready-made manual of devotion for love any more than for church-order or even for Christian philosophy, but to ascertain the cardinal principles apart from which any conception or practice of love in Christianity is unlikely to prove adequate. There will always be a place for the deeper analysis of divine love in its philosophical implications. There will also be room for such warm expressions of mystical love as we meet from Catherine of Siena to Christina Rossetti and Dora Greenwell, from Raymond Lull to Richard Rolle, from Jacopone da Todi to Samuel Rutherford. But, particularly with reference to the latter, we may say that such a type is hazardous. Any such development, be it ethical, philosophical, or devotional, is as likely to be a departure as a deduction. No one who is acquainted with the history of the Church will hesitate to affirm that 'love' has covered much loose thinking and also much loose living on the part of the devout who have sung or shouted 'I love God' and been idle or worse in their behaviour. The word 'agapemonê' is not so widespread as 'auto-da-fé,' but it denotes something as compromising, something which is as irrelevant to love as the other is to faith, something which is none the less sinister because it may be sincere.

The limits of the sketch do not permit more than a passing reference to any similar development in non-Christian faiths, but we may start with an instructive comparison between the Christian conception of love and a cool estimate dropped by pre-Christian Greek philosophy.

I

The first person to raise the question of the love of God was apparently the Aristotelian to whom we owe the *Magna Moralia*. Some people, he observes (1208*b*), imagine that there is such a thing as friendship with God, "but they are wrong. Our view is that friendship cannot exist except where there is some return of affection. Now, friendship towards God does not admit of love being returned, nor of loving at all. For it would be absurd to say that one loved Zeus (*ἄτοπον γὰρ ἂν εἴη εἰ τις φαίη φιλεῖν τὸν Δία*)." This is emphatic enough. At the same time it is true that not all Aristotelians took so uncompromising a stand upon this issue. Thus the writer who compiled the *Eudemian Ethics* evidently regarded religious love as possible; his tone is more religious here and elsewhere than that of Aristotle himself, for in a certain, limited sense (he allows) love between God and man may be ranked as friendship between a superior and an inferior, as, for example, the relationship of affection between father and son. In such cases "there is not at all, or at least not in equal degree, the return of love for love. For it would be ridiculous to accuse God because the love one receives in return from Him is not equal to the love given to Him" (1238*b*). This argument rests on assumptions which reverse the ordinary view of the religious man, who assumes humbly that his love to God is never equal to God's love for him. But an Aristotelian, viewing God as benefactor and lord, implies that it would be absurd to expect such condescension in the divine nature as would ever equal the deferential affection shown by man. An approximation to this point of view is furnished by the axiom of Spinoza, which delighted Goethe with its emphasis upon disinterested love: 'qui Deum amat, conari non potest ut Deus ipsum contra amet' (*Ethics*, v. 19); though it ought to be recollected that when Spinoza declared that "he who loves God cannot expect God to love him in return," he was thinking of 'love' as implying joy and sorrow, by which, on his philosophy, the Deity could not be affected.[1]

The fact is, the Greek mind never reached the conception of a divine love for man as man. Plato could indeed speak of an admirable moral character as dear to the gods (θεοφιλής), but it remains true that the pre-Christian period does not show in any quarter a real anticipation of love between the deity and man, such as Christianity revealed. Even in apocalyptic Judaism there is as little expectation of a messiah who would interest himself in individuals on earth with the loving, healing care shown by Jesus, as there is of a messiah who would teach the elements of true religion. In Greek thought, love as divine love for men is equally absent. No doubt deities had their favourites. Homer represents Odysseus as enjoying the special care of Athenê, much as some Latin Church worshipper to-day might appeal to a patron saint to safeguard his interests at the celestial court; but this is all, and it is little.

In the contemporary cults no clear evidence is to be found for such a love divine. The famous hymn to Isis (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, xi. 1380; see Deissmann's *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 75 f.) does appear to represent her

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[1] This 'amor intellectualis' was anticipated by Giordano Bruno, particularly in *De gli Eroici furori* (1585), which he dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney.

Egyptian votaries calling her 'Love' (ἀγάπη), just as she was termed φιλία in Palestine no less than Truth (ἀλήθεια) in Egypt. The title, 'Love of the gods,' by which she was invoked in certain Italian circles, lies nearer to the Christian conception of the Father's love for the Son, although it is remote enough. A philosopher, Kerkidas of Megalopolis, in the third century B.C. may have personified Self-sacrifice or Giving as Μετάδως (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, viii. 31), but the reading is uncertain, and in any case this is but a dim abstraction.

In Christianity, on the other hand, especially as it is reflected by the NT literature, this phenomenon is noticeable—a frank, fresh use of 'love' in order to express the relations of God to man, of man to God, and of man to man in the Community of God, and at the same time a noticeable reserve. The one feature is as characteristic as the other. Indeed it is against the background of the former that the latter becomes intelligible. Upon the whole, after making allowance for the variety of religious experience and interpretation in the primitive Church, as that comes out in the literature of the NT, we may say that this reserve is least noticeable in the sphere of love between fellow-members of the Community, and most marked when the writers deal with God's love to man or with man's love to God. The reasons for this will emerge in the course of the discussion, but, by way of introduction, we may approach the problem by considering a striking anticipation of the Christian position upon love, yielded not by Greek thought but by Indian aspiration.

2

The nearest analogy to Christian love is furnished by the remarkable development of 'bhakti' in Hinduism, which proves that the Oriental mind had room in it for more than the ideal of passive absorption in which Buddhism sought emancipation from the woe of existence. For bhakti at its purest is neither charity nor intellectual knowledge of God, but a passionate adoration of religious faith, usually elicited by some incarnate deity. No longer is the older Hindu nirvana the goal of the soul's quest; what is now sought and found is a form of personal communion, based on more than meditation; it is an affection of the heart for the Lord, which issues in praise of Him, in sorrow for sin, submission to the divine will, purity of heart, and utter unselfishness. The bhakti reformation breathed a warm air into the rarefied atmosphere of Brahmanism, when it started in the eleventh or twelfth century of our era. But it was the revival and recovery of vital germs concealed in some parts of India's ancient literature; there seems to be no doubt that bhakti was known to some early circles of Buddhists, and that parts of the sacred poem, the *Bhagavad-Gita* or 'Song of the Adorable,' are pre-Christian, dating from the second century B.C. This hymn of trustful, adoring love glorifies the divine 'prasada' or grace, which is almost equivalent to Hosea's divine 'hesed'; on the other hand, the human bhakti or response of affection is voiced, even with what appears an equivalent for faith (sraddha). This affection for an infinite, loving God shows itself preeminently, though not exclusively, in unselfish service rendered to man out of devotion to the supreme Lord; the votaries may be said to fulfil their social duties from love to God. Some influence on the later developments within the post-Christian Gita may have been exerted by the Christian communities of South India, but the essential principle of bhakti is earlier and indigenous. It is true that no one incarnation or avatar of the divine is sufficient to manifest the Deity fully; indeed the monotheism is compromised by subordinate deities in the background. Bhakti assumes that successive incarnations are required; so that when a Christian said of the Lord Jesus that *the divine Fulness dwelt in him*, he was saying what no bhakti-worshipper would affirm about any of his deities. It is true that bhakti never dreams of any incarnation of the deity daring to die for men; in fact, escape from the cosmic illusion is not unknown as the soul's desire. It is true that bhakti is predominantly individualistic, in spite of its brotherly conscience, very much as second-century Stoicism was, and that it has developed in some cases, just as the Christian idea of love has done, erotic abuses of an undesirable nature. Yet, despite the crude elements of mythology and even of materialism from which it is not free, this wonderful impulse of bhakti witnesses to the innate passion of the soul for some depth in the heart of the divine which will answer to the depth of its own desire, a desire for something less abstract than the Infinite or the Absolute—in a word, for a God who is the Home of the human spirit, and with whom we may have communion, not simply because we crave it but because He does also. There is, in the nobler phases of this bhakti, some approximation to a synthesis of the divine love for man, man's love for God in return, and man's love for his fellow-man as in some sense the outcome of both.

Those who are interested in the affinities between this and primitive Christianity may consult the recent work of V. Chakkarai, *Jesus the Avatar* (Christian Literature Society for India, 1926), and J. Appasamy's *Christianity as Bhakti Marga, a Study of the Johannine Doctrine of Love* (same publishing house). The article in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (ii. 539–551) or the pages in M. Winternitz's *History of Indian Literature* (i. 431 f.) will form an introduction to the ramifications and the heterogeneous character of bhakti-teaching as well as to its religious significance. In selecting its salient factors one has to idealize it, no doubt, but although the flower grows amid some dubious morality and indubitable mythology, this is as true of some fair growths in mediaeval Latin mysticism upon love to the Lord. "Thus have I declared to you the knowledge more mysterious than any mystery; ponder on it in its fulness, and then act as you like . . . since you are right dear to me, therefore will I declare what is for your welfare. . . . I declare to you truly, you are dear to me" (xviii. 63–65). This is characteristic, but, it must be admitted, so is the following mixed assurance of the deity: "To all born beings I am indifferent; none to me is hateful, none is dear. But those who worship me with devotion dwell in me, and I in them" (ix. 29).

3

One of the appeals of the worshipper in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (xi. 44) is: "Pardon my guilt, adorable Lord, as a father his son's, as a friend his friend's, as a husband his beloved's." It is the prayer of an individual, but it corresponds, in its closing words, to a conception of divine grace towards the Community which had already visited a prophet of Israel. For the nearest approach to the later Christian synthesis of love was made by the prophet Hosea in the eighth century B.C., when he applied the term 'hesed' to the relations between Yahweh and Israel. Through the Septuagint it passed into the NT as (ἔλεος) 'mercy,' but 'mercy' is an inadequate expression for this rich and characteristic word of the OT religion; 'love' or 'loving-kindness' comes more close to the original term. In Hosea it embraces the relation of God to His people, of the people to God, and of Israelites one towards another. Thus (i) one day, as he stood beside the fields which were being ploughed up for sowing, the prophet exclaimed (x. 12):

Sow justice for yourselves,
and reap a harvest of God's love.

(ii) Again, he hears Yahweh reproach the people thus (vi. 4):

This love of yours is like a morning cloud,
like dew that soon will disappear—

where it is the love of the people for Him that is meant. Similarly, in the immediate sequel, he makes Yahweh declare (vi. 5, 6):

So I instruct them by my words,
this precept shines out plain:
love I desire, not sacrifice,
knowledge of God, not any offerings.

The utterance, *Love I desire, not sacrifice,* may be a strong Oriental expression of preference, as though love were ranked better than the cultus, or it may denote the prophet's conviction that ritual sacrifice was non-essential. This is a debated problem, which need not concern us here; the important point is, that Jesus seized on this word with ardour. Yet (iii) there was a third element in 'hesed,' i.e. dutiful love, as it shows itself in acts of kindliness and loyal affection. Thus in xii. 6 'hesed' may be rendered by 'kindness'; to practise kindness or to be kind to one another is a demand of God.

Dwell in your tents,
ever be kind and just,
and in your God put your unfailing trust.

'Hesed' had of course a much wider range than Hosea, but in his pages we find it grouping all three aspects in a unity like the NT 'love'; God's attitude towards the people, their attitude towards Him, and especially their mutual relationship, can all be subsumed under the one rubric of 'hesed.' As Robertson Smith[1] puts it, loyalty and kindness within the community "between man and man are not duties inferred from Israel's relation to Yahweh, they are parts of that relation"—just as, we may add, they are in the NT conception of love. Hence neighbourliness, kindness, unselfishness, and social justice are the main sphere in which love to God is realized. To fail in such duties proves, as the prophet is never tired of repeating, that one does not 'know God' at all; defects in this sphere indicate surely that one is out of touch with God's real character and out of sympathy with His aims, nor will any amount of strictness in the cultus ever make up for the lack. This use of 'hesed' for the true relationship between man and man is all the more noticeable since Hosea, like the other prophets, does not use 'love' in this connexion. It is true, as Mr. Montefiore[1] admits, that 'hesed' does not come quite up to the self-sacrificing, active, passionate level of 'love' in the NT, and that in the OT there is "no emergence of love as the one great supreme link between man and God, as at once the essence of the divine nature and the ideal of all human nature"; but 'hesed,' as Hosea employs it, is not far from the kingdom of God as Jesus taught it.

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[1] *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 162.

The Latin term 'pietas' at its best would correspond to Hosea's 'hesed,' but it would not do full justice to the warm initiative of the divine love for man,[2] which is conspicuous in the OT prophet. Hosea's interpretation of the character of God is reached through the tender, chivalrous love of an injured husband for his wife, a love which magnanimously survives the offence, though it by no means condones it. For him Yahweh is not the god of a nation who are His favourites, irrespective of their moral character, nor is He merely, as we might say, the moral governor who rewards and punishes irrespective of any personal considerations. The covenant or contract between God and His people is taken as an espousal, in which the divine choice (utterly unmerited, Hosea believes) carries with it obligations of loyalty, just as, on the other hand, it involves grateful recognition and moral loyalty on the part of men to such a God. Hosea is the first to develop this conception of love between Yahweh and the people, using the marriage metaphor as he purifies the Canaanite notion of a sexual relation between the deity and the tribe; that is, the semi-physical tie is moralized in a spiritual sense. But, after Hosea, the tendency was to subordinate this conception to that of righteousness or justice. There was a proper desire to safeguard the moral qualities of the divine nature, as holy and just in its requirements, and also a nationalistic trend towards the thought of righteousness as loyalty to the cause of Israel, so that the righteous God became the vindicator of Israel when oppressed and ill-treated by pagans, the champion of their interests. With the deepening of a sense of personal guilt in the later Judaism, the naive confidence in this gracious intervention of God on behalf of His people waned, till the people now pled their weakness and besought His favour on other grounds than those of national membership or obedience to the Law. The righteous were apt to urge what they could do in the way of loyalty or obedience as a factor to be taken into account by God, and His righteousness was regarded as in the main punitive, repentance and amendment being considered to deserve in some way the divine favour and ensure a sort of compromise between righteousness and love in God. A certain moral right on the part of the pious was therefore modestly urged as a ground for expecting to receive God's full favour, and, though the Judaism in which the early Christians started was by no means a religion of bargaining with God, nevertheless there was a disposition to hope that, as man's status might be uncertain at the judgment, God would graciously allow His love to outweigh His retribution.

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[1] *The Old Testament and After*, pp. 209–211.

[2] The same difficulty occurs in the discovery of a European equivalent for the Chinese term 'jên.' Sinologues render it variously by 'benevolence' (which is stiff), or 'altruism' (which is pedantic), or 'virtue' (which is too cold). Mr. J. P. Bruce (*Chu Hsi and his Masters*, pp. 243 f.) plumps for 'love'; but this is too warm for the idea of a love-principle or instinct, even though it does express itself in generous and friendly action.

Christianity broke away from this by emphasizing the gracious initiative of God in a way which rose above any such opposition of attributes. Jesus taught that God the royal and holy Father took the initiative by setting up His kingdom for men, and that men owe all to His action on their behalf. Paul, re-interpreting religion more along rabbinic lines or rather against rabbinic views, meant the same when he taught that our acceptance with God is due entirely to His favour and love, not to any merit on our part. Thus, even Wernle, who regards the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith as one of the apostle's most disastrous creations, admits that it does embody the great and profound truth for which Jesus had stood, viz. that "God is our Father, who freely gives to us whether we deserve it or not, and that we men, just as we are, are His children, living by His love" (*Beginnings of Christianity*, i. 309).

God, as Jesus and Paul interpret Him, is a loving God who is also 'righteous,' not in the older nationalistic sense, but in the deepest sense of the term. For it is an entire mistake to imagine that the Pauline idea of the divine righteousness carries on the OT idea of God as righteous and therefore saving, as though the term meant no more than that He acted invariably in accordance with His purpose. The two parties for Paul are God and man, not God and Israel; those who require His righteousness are not wronged but wrong, people who need to be delivered not from their enemies but from themselves, people who are alienated from God by their sinful disobedience, and for whom the gospel is a gospel not because it reveals a spontaneous force of divine loyalty and favour diffusing itself in the world, but because it manifests a loving God who in Jesus Christ reconciles men to Himself, dealing with their sins against His law. God's righteousness is therefore no mere punitive power, which is at issue with grace or love, but bound up with His love: in the gospel *is the righteousness of God revealed. . . . God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners,* *Christ died for us.* The factor of human sin as a racial bondage had reset the entire situation for Paul, and it is to misconceive him if we imagine that he is using the term 'righteousness' as it was used, for example, by the Second Isaiah. The relation of 'righteousness' to love is still vital, but it is by no means so simple and easy as it was.[1]

The fundamental truth for the apostle is, no doubt, the love of God in His action and attitude towards men. But he interprets this in the light of a larger synthesis which does not ignore holiness or righteousness in the divine nature; the divine love requires expression in self-sacrifice and carries with it an aversion to evil which is the other side of its passion for the good of men, and which involves in turn an attitude of men towards God where 'faith' rather than love is generally the most adequate term. This corresponds with the terminology of Jesus himself, as shown in the synoptic tradition; there is a reserve in the employment of the love-language which is most significant, whether it is God's relation to men or men's relation to God that is in question, a reserve not due to any hesitation or uncertainty, but to the very profundity of feeling evoked. As we might expect, the terminology of Paul is richer in such language, since he was conscious of adoring obedience and trust towards the Lord who had loved him. Yet even here the tendency which is so noticeable in Jesus recurs; his sense of sin leads him in reverence to stress the serious, moral character of the divine love, even as he glories in its free grace, even as he will not allow any claim of human merit to encroach upon the pure, spontaneous love of God as the one source of hope and peace. Similarly, when he expresses what the Old Testament meant by the divine election and favour, he does so in connexion with the Church or the people of God thus chosen and saved by Him freely and for ends corresponding to His world-wide purpose. God's loyalty is still put in terms of His love, but emancipated from any particularistic or national restrictions.

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[1] This I have worked out in the article on 'Righteousness' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, ii. 370–393.

4

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us (who did not belong by birth to the Jewish people), *hath made us live together with Christ.* This is the apostle's conviction; it indicates that the divine pity is more than an emotion evoked by the pathos of existence, such as Oriental religion had already conceived. In the East religious spirits were celebrating the vast love which, according to Buddhist faith, extended to all creation. "The Tathâgata [i.e. the Perfect One, a title of the Buddha] lets his mind pervade the four quarters of the world with thoughts of love. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around and everywhere, will be filled with love far-reaching. . . . There is not one creature that the Tathâgata passes by or leaves aside, but regards them all with mind set free and deep-felt love." This divine love, however, becomes submerged in a vaster pity; the still, sad music of humanity, and of more than humanity, drowns the notes of love, until sheer pity for the sufferings and sorrows of animate creatures is the uppermost strain. The wages of sin is life, and existence comes to be the object of this infinite compassion, existence as the ultimate source of woe. It is for the true Buddhist to meet life with divine pity, love, and sympathy. The Hebrew faith could not share such a view of human destiny, but it came near to this view of the pitifulness of the divine love when the Greek spirit touched it in the Wisdom literature. Sin was still transgression of the divine will, for the Jewish thinker; yet when he conceived the divine attitude to our erring race he dwelt on God's mild, forbearing temper as though it were the outcome of an infinite Power thinking kindly of the little world and little men. Thus in a beautiful passage like *Wisdom* xi. 22 f., the pitifulness and goodwill of God for the world of men are the main qualities of His love:

The whole world before thee is as a grain in the balance,
As a dew-drop falling on the earth at dawn;
Yet hast thou mercy upon all, for thou art almighty;
And man's sins thou overlookest, that they may repent;
For thou lovest all things that are,
And hatest nothing thou hast made—
Didst thou hate aught, thou wouldest not have formed it. . . .
Thou sparest all, for they are thine,
O Sovereign Lord, Lover of souls (δέσποτα φιλόψυχε).

Man's sins thou overlookest (παρορᾷς). This is not quite the same thought as that of the apostle at Athens, when he declares that whilst God overlooks (ὑπεριδὼν) the pre-Christian ages of idolatry as ages of ignorance, He now summons men to repent, in view of the last judgment by Christ (Acts xvii. 30, 31). Nor is it even quite the same as the appeal of Romans ii. 4: *Are you slighting all his wealth of kindness* (χρηστότητος), *forbearance, and patience? Do you not know that God's kindness* (τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ) *is meant to make you repent?*—though kindly forbearance in dealing with froward man is uppermost in the thought of Paul's phrase, as it is here. The climax of the *Wisdom* passage, however, is the description of the Almighty as *Lover of souls*. It is the earliest verbal anticipation of Charles Wesley's line,

Jesu, Lover of my soul—

a hymn which seemed to some to be too daring in this description of Jesus. Even John Wesley did not include it in the Large Hymnbook of 1780, evidently from fear that its opening sounded too familiar, whilst in a number of hymnbooks 'Lover' was altered to 'Refuge' or 'Saviour,' as being more dignified; as late as the nineteenth century

Bishop Wordsworth thought it "inexpressibly shocking" that such a hymn should be sung in Westminster Abbey, by "large mixed congregations in a dissolute part of a populous and irreligious city." This is ultra-sensitive, but it voices an instinctive and healthy dislike to facile expressions of God's love, a dislike which is to be felt in both the OT and the NT. So far as the latter is concerned, there is an evident care to avoid representations of the divine love for men either as a general sentiment or as compassionate pity. God's love is related to the moral realities of human life, not to mere existence, and it is connected with the definite entrance of God into history and experience through Jesus Christ. The real pathos of life is not identified with mere suffering as such, much less with existence as a wheel of being on which men are bound, or as a transient scene where human life is nothing but "a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns" or "a murmur of gnats in the gloom."

God's love, in short, is too serious and vital to be expressed in terms of a vast pity for the tiny, transient lives of men, whilst man's love for God in return has a moral awe and a reverent obedience which spring from a deeper relationship than that of mere items in the cosmos to their Maker. 'Jesu, Lover of my soul,' is another way of voicing what the apostle expressed in his rare outburst of devotion: *The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave up himself for me.* Call the end of this divine love 'holiness,' 'fellowship,' 'obedience,' or what we will, it implies the moral welfare of the human personality, and this object corresponds to the spirit of the divine love which creates the character and fellowship of men.

5

As for love to God, Christianity was never hampered, as early Buddhism was, by an indefiniteness in conceiving the divine personality or nature. It has been pointed out that primitive Buddhism never used the language of love in addressing the Buddha, much less the other deities. "None of the usual terms for love or affection is applied to him;" his votaries speak of honouring him, trusting him, even of 'resting in' him, but not of loving him. "The Indian words for love were not sufficiently elastic to cover this relation—a relation which was not the less deep and genuine, whether it was expressed in terms of the self-surrendering devotion of a believing and adoring 'heart' or of the intellectual love of the philosophic mind."[1] The early Church had inherited very fortunately the tradition of the later Judaism, where the worshipper not only could 'love God' but speak of loving His law, as in the hundred and nineteenth psalm, with a passionate yearning for inward communion and obedience. When the deeper revelation came in the person of Jesus Christ, this love naturally stirred direct expressions of grateful trust, which drew upon love-terms without compromising reverence and awe. These we shall occasionally meet in the NT, anticipations of the personal love, stirred by grateful penitence and adoring wonder, which finds voice in great mediaeval hymns like that once attributed to Francis Xavier, 'O Deus ego amo te,' or in the still more famous lines traditionally connected with Bernard of Clairvaux, beginning 'Jesu dulcis memoria,' and containing the words, 'Expertus potest credere Quid sit Jesum diligere'—words which are mistranslated in the ordinary version, for they mean, 'only he who has tried to love Jesus knows what love to Jesus is,' not—

> The love of Jesus, what it is,
> None but his loved ones know.

This by the way, however. Such inner devotion is one expression of love to God, like that of the woman in the city;

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[1] Rhys Davids, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, viii. 160, 161.

the other is the service of those who belong to God at our side, the expression of love for God in personal help and devotion to others. The latter will come before us later. Meantime, it is needful to notice how easily the former becomes corrupt and formal, in different ways. And the sharpest illustration comes from the quarrels and controversies of the French Church during the stormy, pregnant period of the seventeenth century, when the Jesuits and the Jansenists were at loggerheads.

The Jesuits, with their elaborated system of casuistry, a subtle ethical scheme constructed by masters of formal logic, who sought to make the path of God broad and smooth for as many people as possible, depreciated love for God in such a way that the outraged Pascal pilloried them for all time in the tenth *Provincial Letter*. The Jesuit champion quotes naively from his authority, Escobar, various opinions on the question, when a Christian is obliged to show love for God. "Suarez says it is enough if we love Him some time before death, but he does not say when. Vasquez says it is sufficient to love Him at the point of death; some say, at baptism, others say, at festivals. Hurtado de Mendoza declares that we are obliged to love God once a year, and that we are being indulgently treated in not being obliged to do it more often. Father Conich thinks we are bound to it once in three or four years; Henriquez, every five years; but Filiutius says it is probable that one is not rigorously obliged to do it every five years. When, then? He leaves the question for wise men to decide." In fact, the Jesuit assures Pascal, by God's goodness we are really not obliged so much to love God as not to hate Him. He points to the comfortable doctrine of distinguished Jesuit theologians that by the cost of redemption, by the precious blood of Christ, we in the gospel are dispensed altogether from the painful and irksome obligation ("l'obligation fascheuse") of loving God at all, that duty belonging to the superannuated

Old Covenant; God's children, under grace, are granted the favour of freedom from the duty of loving God!

Pascal is horrified at this perversion of the truth. What? he asks. You violate the great commandment which contains both the Law and the prophets! You are striking at the very heart of religion! And so the blood of Christ has flowed that we might be dispensed from loving Him! "Strange theology of our days! You dare to set aside the anathema which St. Paul pronounces upon those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . You would have those worthy to enjoy God for all eternity who have never once loved Him in their lives. 'Tis the mystery of iniquity fulfilled!"

Such was one extreme, against which the Jansenists protested, as did Boileau in his epistle 'Sur l'amour de Dieu.' Not that all the non-Jansenists shared the Jesuit view, by any means; Francis de Sales nobly demanded some explicit love for God as part of true penitence. Nor did the Jansenists always present the duty of love to God in a spirit of love; there is a note of harshness and even threatening in some of their arguments which is out of keeping with the theme. Still, though they occasionally urged the truth of love in a spirit that was not loving, they did maintain the essential NT truth of love to God as a lasting command for the Christian, in opposition to the distortions of Jesuit manuals.

Some of their party, however, swung aside to the extravagance of claiming what was called a disinterested love for God. In reality this throbbed at the heart of the mysticism which characterized Madame Guyon and Fénelon. Such natures did not understand the severity of the Christian God of love, as Pascal did; they craved a God whose essence was eternal, and with whom they could be in communion passively, as the Infinite Eternal Being. Banish all thought of gain, they cried! When one loves God truly, one loves Him not for His goodness, not for the bliss which one may hope to find in Him; one loves Him, even if—supposing the impossible—He were pleased to render His beloved eternally unhappy.

This is a quietistic version of love to God, against which, as we shall have occasion to see, the NT stands out soundly. It develops a mystical ambition which seeks dissolution in the Deity, for the Abyss divine cannot yield any bliss of personal fellowship. These seventeenth-century theosophists really were yearning for love as an evaporation of personality. Cowper translated some of Madame Guyon's hymns, in which, for example, we hear the rapt votary singing:

> O Glory, in which I am lost,
>   Too deep for the plummet of thought!
> On an ocean of deity tossed,
>   I am swallowed, I sink into naught.

Cowper, honest Christian that he was, could not have shared this ecstasy of his French friend; he had no desire for such an exalted, passionless Deity, with whom communion meant the swallowing up of personality, and he would not have sympathized with the mystical paradox that it were better to reign in hell with Christ than to be without him in heaven—a cry which summed up the disinterested love for which these mystics pled. Indeed, the whole controversy about disinterested love was as meaningless as the ethical debate about self-interest: 'Can you be really unselfish at all? If doing good to other affords an inward joy, can you say that to be unselfish is disinterested?' It is an idle questioning, as idle as this quietism of Madame Guyon and her party, in their vain quest for an abstract love of God—noble in their protest against a mercenary religion, but vain in their effort to base love on a selfless affection. There is always a debased religion against which such theories of disinterested love have their justification. "Some people," said Meister Eckhart sharply, "some people love God as they love a cow, which you love for the milk and cheese and your own profit from it." Against such a selfish perversion of religion even exaggerated protests are to be welcomed, and we can understand how some glorious spirits let themselves go in denouncing the subtle or coarse religion of their day as a form of bargaining with the Infinite. The mystics undoubtedly purified the air by their unqualified attacks on the doctrine of saving oneself at all costs by means of the ecclesiastical system. But their philosophy of the spiritual life was frequently based on an inadequate idea of personality, and upon a conception of God which made love for Him a refined passion for the Absolute rather than a devotion to the will of God as that is revealed in the active duties and relationships of life. Such love for God inevitably tended to dissolve the tie of love between man and man, which, in the teaching of Jesus and in the NT generally, is so vitally bound up with love to God. To love the Lord is misconceived if it is imagined that one remembers Him better by forgetting others at our side, or by ignoring the eternal significance of His self-sacrifice for our sakes.

The inward, contemplative love of the Lord, to which the greater mystics witness with such power, has seemed to some impossible in modern days. Jowett,[1] for example, thought it impracticable to "feel such an attachment to Christ as is prescribed by Thomas à Kempis," on the ground that it is contrary to human nature to "concentrate our thoughts upon a person scarcely known to us, who lived 1,800 years ago." The NT writers had no such apprehensions. Peter could say to people who had never seen Jesus on earth, *whom having not seen you love*, and John assumes that the inward personal love for the Lord lasts on, in the second generation. The witness of the saints confirms this, and is a standing testimony against any suggestion that in the course of the centuries such devotion to the Lord must be reduced to admiration for an ideal goodness or devotion to abstract visions of human excellence. There will always be a function for this temperament in the Church, sometimes as a protest of the heart against a contemporary absorption of interest in doctrine, sometimes as the instinctive outburst of an inward piety which requires highly strung, emotional expression. History proves, however, that it has to be safeguarded, first (i) by a warning against a morbid sentimentalism which would defeat its ends, and (ii) by a reminder that other attitudes are possible for Christians who do not share the mystical or emotional spirit, but who yet have a genuine love for the same Lord.

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[1] *Life of Benjamin Jowett*, ii. 151, 152.

Perhaps this direct love of Christ, as it was felt by his first followers, is not so rare a thing to-day as Sir John Seeley imagined that it was, when he wrote his famous chapter (xiv.) in *Ecce Homo*. He deplores the lack, for the most part, in ordinary religion, of what Christ held to be all in all, "spontaneous warmth, free and generous devotion." It is indeed precarious to draw up estimates of contemporary Christianity, on this score or indeed on any other, but surely it is not unfair to remember, as we pass any judgment, that (*a*) the use of love-language was by no means uniform in the early Church, and that (*b*) there may be racial difficulties which occasionally hinder the use of the letter, though not of the spirit, of genuine love towards the Lord. The former reserve will emerge more than once in the course of our sketch. The latter may be illustrated, at this point, from the Chinese. They are not an emotional race, and apparently traditional associations make it hard for some of them to enter into the Western Church's employment of love-language towards God. Speaking of the average convert in Formosa, for example, Dr. Campbell N. Moody[1] notes that "the idea of loving God seems scarcely to have occurred to him; yet it ought to be understood that the Chinese use of the term 'love' differs from ours in two respects. With the Chinese 'love' is love in action; and thus it is an unseemly boast to speak of loving one another, whereas one may rightly say, 'He greatly loved me,' meaning, He treated me with kindness and perhaps gave me presents. Moreover, 'love,' with the Chinese, is condescending love. Parents 'love' their children; children do not presume to 'love' their parents, they reverence them. In general, the great may 'love' the small; the small cannot 'love' the great. Accordingly, when Chinese first hear us speak of loving God, the expression is apt to seem irreverent. The thought of loving God does not arise spontaneously, though the feeling may be present." Thus, this acute observer continues, "if we desired to find what was in a man's heart, we might rather ask him whether he put God first; so that if he had to choose between God and pleasure, gain, friends, reputation, or in a word self, he would let everything go and cleave to God." Which is, after all, the supreme NT test of love or loyalty, as we shall see.

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[1] In *The Heathen Heart*, pp. 124 f. Mr. E. H. Parker puts it thus: the emotional phase of Love to God is apt to appear to the logical Chinese mind "much in the same light as would a Reverence for the Equator" (*China and Religion*, p. 69).

6

As for the love of Christians for one another, here, as I have said, the NT shows least reserve. Always and in all ways love for God is linked not simply to moral endeavour but also to the experience of intercourse in the communities of the faith. Yet, even in using the term 'love' freely for mutual duty between members of the Church, there is a repeated warning against abuses which were felt to lie on the verge of this supreme command. When love of this kind was isolated, it also became exaggerated into an untruth; when it was severed from the controlling religious motives as revealed in the character of God, it readily became sentimental. Often in the history of Christianity some predilection for a philosophical or an ethical theory has deflected this Christian love. One illustration may be given at this point, since it brings out the besetting weakness of popular ideas about Christian love, namely, that this affection evaporates anything like moral indignation. Love cannot be harsh indeed; forgiving sin must be as present to the mind as punishing sin. Yet love may be stern and it must be severe in certain circumstances. *Whose faith is hurt, and I am not aglow with indignation?*[1] . . . *There are plenty of insubordinate creatures who impose on people with their empty arguments, particularly those who have come over from Judaism; they must be silenced.* There were indeed people who imagined that plain-speaking about their faults was an unkindness; the apostle has to remonstrate with some: *am I therefore your enemy because I tell you the truth*—the honest, unflattering truth about yourselves, for your soul's good? This duty of speaking out against false conceptions of religion or against practices which endanger character was what Newman had in mind when, in one of his poems, he spoke of "learning to hate, before daring to love." It was in the beginning of the Oxford Movement, and, as Dr. Scott Holland points out, this uncompromising attitude represented a protest against "the glib and shallow tolerance of the popular religion, and the loose and boneless sentimentality of the prevailing evangelicalism," a protest which is not without its permanent value. It is indeed a high but a dangerous path. The truer sequence is to love first, and then, in the light of what love means, to hate—to hate whatever compromises the value of one's personal life, or even anyone who injures that supreme treasure, to hate those who misrepresent the true religion, as the authorities did in the days of Jesus. When the 'gentle' Jesus bade men love their enemies, it was not as enemies who sought to thwart their highest interests.[1] Nor did he shrink from denouncing a class like the scribes and Pharisees, who seemed to him to be deflecting right religion, and who, as responsible people, were judged deserving of his exposure and opposition. The God whom he called men to love and imitate was not a 'bon Dieu,' genially tolerant of distinctions between truth and falsehood or between right and wrong, but a God whose love embraced moral severity and justice, and also, by its quality of 'holiness,' reacted sternly against those who degraded or misled human souls. Such moral indignation is one of the most difficult as it is one of the most essential qualities in human character. As Newman himself confessed, it sometimes led him astray; it "laid me open not unfairly to the charge of fierceness in certain steps that I took, or words that I published." Nevertheless there have been few representations or misrepresentations of Christian love which have done more to discredit it than the identification of this spirit with an easy-going temper of mere good-nature. There is the less need to urge this point after Bishop Butler's sermon on Anger and Sir John Seeley's three chapters in *Ecce Homo* (xxi.–xxiii.). As Butler wisely points out, however, we often see, in the case of a quarrel or dispute, that the man who was originally in the right, i.e. as the injured party, becomes more to blame than the original offender, since moral resentment easily stiffens into a personal animosity and comes to conceal spiteful hatred under the guise of just indignation. The real resentment which Jesus taught and felt, the divine hatred of cruelty and hypocrisy and injustice, is a vital element in sincere love. But it is never vindictive. The fair test for the injured party is this: Would you feel honestly glad if the offender truly repented of his baseness and sought to make amends for his offence? Moral indignation has this as its real end. Once this is reached, its function ceases.

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[1] These are the words quoted by Bernard (*Sermones in Cant.*, xii. 2), when he thinks of the rich and fragrant services of the apostle to the Church. It is remarkable that in choosing illustrations of distinguished Christians who displayed unselfish love on a large scale, Bernard instinctively turns to Paul. "Et primus occurrit, sicut ubique solet, mihi Paulus." It is a refreshing contrast to the Roman depreciation of Paul, which is so perplexing and disappointing in a writer like Dante.

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[1] "To love one's enemies is to love the thief, the impious person, the adulterer, not as a sinner, with reference to the actions whereby he is befouling the name of man, but as he is a man, and the work of God" (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, iv. 13).

7

When Christianity begins, we find men in the Church conscious of a new relationship to God and to one another, for which the most central and simple term was 'love.' This represented much more than a mere sequel to the summary of religion as 'Love God and your neighbour,' for Christianity recognized a new depth and range of love as revealed by the mission of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, a disclosure of God's love in history and experience which made 'love' a fresh and unprecedented relationship. Love to God, stirred by the redeeming love of God Himself in Christ, covered more than loyalty and personal devotion; it included in some aspects, and especially for some temperaments, a passionate affection for the Lord. And this in turn heightened mutual love in the communities, for Jesus had extended the term 'neighbour' till it included anyone near and in need, and he had also widened the term 'love' till it embraced personal duty towards an opponent. Hence the ordinary sense of mutual love, which suggests admiration for a friend, a desire to be with him as much as possible, a wish for his good and happiness, and a willingness to further his interests, became intensified into a religious concern for the ends of God in His personality, which also might embrace a warm, emotional attitude to Him. Love to a fellow-member as to God Himself was, no doubt, often expressed by terms like honour, trust, and service, for the new religion was not bound to a special vocabulary. Jesus himself never spoke of hope or of freedom, though his religion was instinct with both. Nor did his followers confine themselves to words of 'love'; they often had recourse to other terms than 'love' in speaking either to him or of him; indeed, 'faith and love' was the phrase which summed up their religion most commonly. Nevertheless it was in their group that for the first time the word was heard, *God is love*; and outsiders who marked their warm fellowship instinctively said, not yet in any ironical sense, 'How these Christians love one another!' 'Love' may not be the invariable term, but upon the whole it is distinctive of the new faith and fellowship in these circles scattered round the Mediterranean basin. Misconceptions may be avoided by a modern reader if he will bear in mind the simple reminder that such language ought always to be read in the light of the creative religious movement which throws it up, not merely in view of current and contemporary usage among the Jews or pagan cults in the outside world. Even when some early Christian employs the same word or phrase as a rabbi or a pagan, it does not follow that he is thinking the same thought; his meaning is to be inferred from the truths and convictions which lie at the heart of his own faith, and for which he catches up a term like 'love' as a not inadequate expression of what in the last result cannot be put into exact language at all. *The Lord is my shepherd*, sang the Hebrew psalmist. Why should it be natural for the Christian hymnist to render this, 'The King of Love my shepherd is'? Obviously there is an ethos in the religion which demands such an expression. 'Love' must correspond to something essential in the belief and experience of the faith. Like the Greek terms for 'peace,' 'salvation,' and 'gospel,' 'love' lay in the usage of the first century; it was current in the religious revivals and survivals of the day, ready for a fresh content to be poured into it. And this was done by primitive Christianity, so emphatically that the term became fairly characteristic of the faith. Indeed, it denotes one mark of its personal identity. As one studies primitive Christianity in that syncretistic age, what impresses one is the strong, instinctive sense, which from the very first it seems to have possessed, of being itself. Amid the various forms of Judaism, with some of which it had much in common, it refused to be mistaken for a sect or casual variety of the ancestral religion. Borrowing sometimes the terms and even the ideas of the popular mystery-cults of the day, it remained different from any of them. And this consciousness of a special vocation went back to its faith in Jesus the Lord. The interpretation of God's revelation in him as a revelation of love is derived from no known source in messianic or apocalyptic Judaism any more than in the mystery-cults. The more one marks stray parallels of language, the more is one impressed by the fact that the Christian movement had a vital, new life, and that this went back to what Jesus had been and done. Here was a religion in which membership could not be combined with membership in the cults; it involved a break with Judaism, if it was to be true to itself. And in an analysis of love we recognize the reasons for this definite consciousness of personal identity. The fact is that, in spite of misconceptions, and after making every due deduction, we are entitled to hold that Christianity from the first may justly be called the religion of love. "What has made Christianity an invincible power in the world has been the conviction that somehow or other the life of love is the divinest, the best life we can conceive, and that everyone who even for moments knows what it is to lose himself in others is doing what God does eternally."[1] To indicate how this conviction arose in the life of the Church as reflected within the pages of the NT, and to draw an outline of its content, is the object of the following pages.

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[1] R. L. Nettleship, *Remains*, vol. i, p. 105.

8

The one fruitful method of handling such a subject is to avoid any undue isolation, even of such a cardinal feature, for this would lead to inevitable misconceptions, by throwing the theme out of proportion. When the primitive Christians thought of God's relation to themselves, or of their response to Him, or of their new fellowship with one another, they did use this term 'love.' It was a simple, telling, and central way of expressing their faith. Yet we may easily misread their meaning, not only by introducing some of the conventional associations which attach to the term in modern usage, but by failing to see how the love-spirit took other forms of expression. Any study which perforce confines itself to love as such, must allow for phenomena beyond its purview. Even in Paulinism and in the Johannine interpretation, where love is more central than in any other sphere of the literature, it is the central phrase in a group. Faith, righteousness, grace, fellowship, reverence, holiness, service—these and other terms gather round it, and are sometimes preferred to it. Simple, telling, and central as 'love' was, for the primitive communities, it was complex as well as simple, so complex that in order to be telling it had to draw upon cognate terms; and while it was central, or came to be central, the truth which it embodied was generally apprehended by the help of other religious conceptions. Nevertheless, whilst a study of what is meant by 'love' in the NT cannot be confined to an analysis of the word and its meaning, much less to a verbal examination of the term and its usage, there is significance in two linguistic phenomena which meet us on the threshold.

(*a*) The avoidance of the Greek term ἔρως (erôs) is not accidental. Love implies a sense of worth or value in the beloved object. In the eyes of him who loves, the object of love is desirable and valuable, and that object is personality.

for the sphere of love is pre-eminently personal life in those who are capable of mutual understanding and close relationships. This conviction leads to one or other of two impulses, the desire to possess the object or to enrich it. There is also, of course, the attitude of moral admiration, but while this enters into love it is less of an impulse. "There can but two things create love," Jeremy Taylor argues in *Holy Living* (iv. 3); "perfection and usefulness. To which answer on our part, first admiration and secondly desire, and both these are centred in love." Now, desire in the former sense of craving to possess predominates in sexual love, and for it the Greeks used their term ἔρως or longing desire. No doubt this term could rise to include higher impulses, as it does in the Platonic dialogue of *The Symposium*, where ἔρως glows with an almost mystical fervour, as Plato employs it to express the craving or quest of the soul for goodness or happiness, a passionate yearning for the bliss of life. Probably this was what induced Shelley to translate the dialogue, this conception of Love or Erôs as an absorbing passion for the immortal, for the beautiful in mind and body, a Love which in its higher phases becomes an adoration of the good, a rapture of really religious enthusiasm for eternity and truth. Still, the loftier the Platonic Erôs rises, the less personal it becomes; an air of abstraction plays round it. Moreover, although it starts from the human self, it always stops short of self-sacrifice.

The earlier vogue of Erôs or some equivalent as the cosmic power of harmony and life, which occurs in the speculations of Parmenides and Empedocles,[1] reappears more richly in the 'Alma Venus' of Lucretius, but there is no trace of such an idea about love in the NT. In the Fourth Gospel, for example, the creative power of God is associated with the Logos; love is kept strictly for human nature as its sphere, and its expression involves self-sacrifice, unlike the Platonic Erôs, unlike even Philo's 'grace' (χάρις) of God, which otherwise comes so near to the Christian idea of a generous, bountiful affection. The identification of love as the principle of cosmic harmony with human love is made by Boethius in the *Consolatio Philosophiae* (ii. 8), where he glorifies love (amor) as the ruling force by means of which earth, sky, and sea are held in place, and then as the source of binding laws for society, as the inspiration of true marriage, and the spring of friendship. "O happy race of men, if love that rules the heavens rules your minds." Here at any-rate Boethius is nearer to Neoplatonism than to Christianity, as he also is in iv. 6:

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[1] See F. M. Cornford's *From Religion to Philosophy* (1912), pp. 119 f., 232 f.

> Hic est cunctis communis amor
> Repetunturque boni fine teneri,
> Quia non aliter durare queant,
> Nisi conuerso rursus amore
> Refluant causae quae dedit esse.

Professor Nygren has recently (*Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*, 1929, 690–733) compared these and other classical and Christian developments, in his study of "Eros and Agape."

With Erôs thus denoting the desire of the human self for the highest good and perfect beauty, it is not surprising that when the Jews began to think of their religious love in Greek, ἔρως and its group of terms came occasionally to their lips, as the LXX and the Wisdom-literature prove. "Love Wisdom and she will take care of you" (Proverbs iv. 6) naturally became ἐράσθητι αὐτῆς κτλ, and the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* (viii. 2) is free to confess that he became an ἐραστής of Wisdom for her beauty, 'enamoured of her.' The sexual metaphor here is akin to the mystical suggestiveness of Plato's use. But still more significant is Philo's frank employment of the term erôs. His word for 'loving God' is φιλόθεος,[1] but he does not eschew erôs. Thus, in speaking of Abraham's heroic obedience to the call of God, as he went to sacrifice Isaac, he remarks: "Although he was attached to the boy by an unspeakable affection, he neither blenched nor wavered in soul but adhered firmly to his indomitable, unalterable resolve. Such was his overpowering passion (ἔρωτι) of love for God that he triumphed by sheer force over all the charms of natural affection and kindred" (*De Abrahamo*, 32). Again, "the finest definition of eternal life is to be possessed by a passionate love (ἔρωτι καὶ φιλίᾳ) and affection for God"—this in a comment (*De Profugis*, 11) on the admonition to love God (ἀγαπᾶν κτλ, Deut. xxx. 20).

In view of this, it becomes truly significant that the NT never employs ἔρως. The reason seems to be that, in spite of its devotional possibilities, the term had been compromised by its lower associations of sensuous desire and lust. Unless we are prepared to believe that its omission is accidental, the only explanation of its absence from the pages of the NT is that the writers had an instinctive feeling of its unworthiness for what they meant by love, probably because it was less capable than ἀγάπη of suggesting affection or too identified with desire. Yet its banishment from the pages of the vocabulary of the early Church was merely temporary. As remarkable as its absence from the NT is its return to the lips of some early Christians. At first, it is true, in the lower sense—for when Ignatius assures the Roman Christians that "my ἔρως has been crucified, and in me there is no fire of earthly longing," he means that his 'lust' has been killed out. Yet not long afterwards Justin, we are hardly surprised to find, echoes the Platonic meaning of the term, when he tells how he was "seized by an ardent love (ἔρωτι) for the prophets and for those who are Christ's friends" (*Dial.*, viii. 1). Indeed, in the fourth century Rufinus, like Origen before him, thought Ignatius had really meant that his Divine Love (i.e. Jesus Christ) had been crucified.

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[1] Once in the NT (2 Timothy iii. 4) men are censured for preferring pleasure to God, for being φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι. Compounds in φιλ- are not uncommon in the Pastoral Epistles, but this happens to be the only place even there where a NT writer use the generic term φιλόθεος.

Elsewhere, in Polycarp, Christ may be called 'Love,' if some editors are right in interpreting his praise of the Philippians (i. 1): *you have followed these copies of the true Love* (i.e. of the Lord Jesus Christ); but μιμήματα τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἀγάπης may mean simply 'patterns of genuine love.' The cognate personification of Jesus as Grace is not certain in Ignatius (Eph. xi. 1: *either let us fear the Wrath to come or love the Grace that has already come*) or in the eucharistic prayer of the *Didachê* (x. 6: *let Grace come and let this world pass away*). In any case, when Christ is called 'Beloved' in the NT (see below), it is 'beloved by God the Father,' not by Christians. Not until after the NT does the term 'Beloved' as an adoring address from Christians appear in literature.

(*b*) However, while in the LXX erôs and its allied terms are very rarely used, and hardly ever without some sensuous or sensual connotation, the NT avoids them altogether, preferring the term ἀγάπη. This is the second linguistic phenomenon. In the LXX ἀγάπη also had sensuous associations. Whether these attached to it in ordinary usage, it is impossible to say; since those who dredge the inscriptions and the papyri[1] have not yet brought up any definite instances of its employment in vernacular Greek, which would illustrate the contemporary interpretation of the term. In the Alexandrian Greek of the Jews, however, it had already acquired higher associations. Thus the author of the *Epistle of Aristeas* (229) calls piety "the pre-eminent form of beauty, whose power lies in love (ἀγάπη), which is God's gift," and Philo, in one of his deeper passages

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[1] See Deissmann's *Light from the Ancient East* (fourth edition, 1927), pp. 75, 76.

(*Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, 14), uses ἀγάπη in describing love for God; in comparing fear and love as religious motives, he argues that those who have a spiritual conception of God are inspired by love for Him, whilst fear belongs to men upon the anthropomorphic level. When Christianity first began to think and speak in Greek, it took up ἀγάπη and its group of terms more freely, investing them with the new glow with which the NT writings make us familiar, a content which is invariably religious.

The exceptions prove the rule. In Ephesians v. 25 f., as in the parallel passage Colossians iii. 19, husbands are bidden to *love* their wives; but the former passage adds, *as Christ loved the Church*, etc. It is recognized that men may *love the world* (1 John ii. 15), or that a man may *love the present age* (or *world*), as the author of 2 Timothy iv. 10 allows; but this is a perverted form of 'love,' in the sense of selfish devotion to external things. Otherwise the NT recognizes 'love' merely within the sphere of religion; even when it is the affection of one Christian for another, it implies the Christian community and the Christian atmosphere of motive and spirit. Thus married women in the Church are bidden to *continue in faith and love* (1 Timothy ii. 15), these marital duties being obviously grounded in their religion, as in the admonition that young wives must be *trained to love their husbands and children* (φιλάνδρους, φιλοτέκνους, Titus ii. 4). In the Akhmim fragment of the *Gospel of Peter* (50), however, the generic use of ἀγαπᾶν occurs, as the writer speaks of the funeral rites which women are wont to pay to their dear dead (τοῖς ἀγαπωμένοις αὐταῖς).

9

A new religious movement creates its own language as it creates its proper organization, partly by taking over for its special purposes what is already to hand, and partly by creating fresh expressions for its spirit. In the case of 'love,' the Christian religion acted in both ways. Already in Judaism the term had been used widely, to denote the personal affection of husband for wife, of parent for child, or of friend for friend (*thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women*), and also to express the attitude of Israel, collectively and individually, to Yahweh, as in the central command, *Thou shalt love Yahweh thy God*, where love denotes devotion and loyalty; furthermore, the term expressed the care and choice of God for His people, implying goodwill and devotion to their welfare, or again it voiced the relationship of mutual loyalty and goodwill between members of Israel, where neighbour was bidden love his neighbour. Within this wide range the force and point of the term naturally varied. It is always needful to watch the nuances of such a popular term, especially as these are developed afresh in Christianity. "The general sense of a word survives in books, and it is sometimes possible by a comparison of passages to discriminate shades of meaning; but it is seldom or never possible to be sure that we have seized the precise notions which the word conveyed long ago to the men in whose mouths it was a part of living speech. A thousand associations which we cannot guess at, reaching back into the infancy of the people, becoming more complex with its growth, intertwining themselves with every part of its civil and social being, were blent together in every word through which this life found utterance, and dyed each with tints which are lost for ever when the glow from which they were caught is extinct."[1] It requires historical imagination to invest the term 'love' in the OT with the exact and varied associations which it bore in the national life, before it passed on to the faith of Christians, where, for all their shortcomings, the vital glow has never wholly died out of the word.

[1] R. C. Jebb, *Characters of Theophrastus*, pp. 1, 2.

(i) One nuance we miss in Christianity. There is no reference in the NT to the idea that God is to be loved as our Maker and Creator. This appears in *Barnabas* (xix.), where the first mark of the Way of Light is: *thou shalt love thy Maker*, and in the *Didachê*, where (i. 2) the Way of Life begins thus: *thou shalt love the God who made thee.* If the common source of both passages is some Jewish ethical manual, this counsel would be linked to the idea expressed by Akiba in the second century (Pirke Aboth, iii. 18): *Beloved is man, because he has been created in the Image* (of God). The reasons for early Christianity avoiding such a conception[1] are probably (*a*) the concentration of God's fatherly nature in the new creation of His people rather than in mere creation, and (*b*) the connexion of the divine Image with the person of the Son, as in Paul's epistles.

It is interesting to notice how early this slipped into the very citations of words from the gospel. By the middle of the second century Justin Martyr is quoting Matthew xxii. 37 f. thus: *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve, the Lord God who made thee* (*Apol.* i. 16). The need for opposing the gnostic separation of Redeemer and Creator led to a new stress on God's creative functions, though not specifically in every case as a reason for loving Him. The latter did come soon, however. When Milton's Adam protested,

> We never shall forget to love
> Our Maker and obey Him whose command
> Single is yet so just,

he was only repeating what thousands had said already in earlier centuries of the Church.

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[1] It reappears later, e.g. in the strong ethical section of Calvin's *Institutes* (iii. 7, 6), where he teaches that Christian love to other men must have regard to the divine image in them, no matter how obscured this may be by their misdoings; "Scriptura docet non esse respiciendum quid ex se ipsis mereantur homines sed imaginem Die in cunctis considerandum, cui nihil non et honoris et dilectionis debeamus."

(ii) One usage of the term is obvious at the very outset. Out of the primitive polygamy in Israel the antithesis of love and hate arose, indicating the preference of the man for one woman above another in the household; he was said to 'hate' the wife whom he slighted in favour of her rival. Thus the regulations preserved in Deuteronomy xxii. 15 f. show a situation in which a man has 'two wives, one whom he loves and one whom he slights,' for 'slights' is a better rendering than 'hates' here. The antithesis is between affection and indifference, and really expresses a strong preference. This usage passed into the religious language, as when Israel could voice their antipathy to Edom by declaring that God loved Jacob and hated Esau (Malachi i. 2); it became a natural expression for exclusiveness and animosity. Israel, conscious of being the people of God, whom He had selected and honoured with a special mission, thought of this as God's love to them. In the NT this nationalist nuance is dropped, of course.[1] But the metaphor lingers in the popular language about devotion, on the part of man to God:

> *No one can serve two masters:*
> *either he will hate the one and love the other.*

Here 'hate' is a strong term for indifference to the interests of a master, as it is in the claim for exclusive devotion to Christ, which may involve, in special heroic circumstances, that the claims of the family must be set aside: *if anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, aye and his own life, he cannot be a disciple of mine.*

(iii) Similarly, when Jesus rules out all 'hate' from life, as he forbids his followers to hate even their enemies, and bids them love one another, he uses the term 'love' in a large sense. Such love cannot be exactly the same as the love of personal affection which knits people closely in special ties; it is generalized into a goodwill of active interest, for which the best definition is "devotion to the ends of God in human personality." The new creative power of the religion required a fresh range for the term, and consequently used it to cover the wider relations of man and man as well as the more intimate relations of ordinary life in the fellowship. The Christian was called to 'love' many in whom he could not take delight or with whom he could not be specially pleased. Human nature in the Church includes those who are less likeable than others; affinities and natural inclinations draw us to some more than to others, even among those towards whom we may be well-disposed. Neither is it possible to 'love' our enemies in the sense that we can pretend to care for them as we do for the like-minded. The point of the unqualified command to love one another is that we must not cease, on any provocation, to regard them as moral personalities; it is a warning against allowing ourselves to treat them as objects of contempt or with aversion and indifference, instead of viewing them as objects of God's purpose no less than we ourselves are; it summons us to do our best to awaken in them the sense of their relation to Him, a relation which they may have forgotten. Instead of retaliating or criticizing them, when they injure us, we are bound to behave generously and steadily towards them as persons in whom God has ends of His own. To 'love' them does not mean that we are pleased with them in their present position, or that we are to be amiable to them; it means a new moral relationship, for which 'love' was a new term.

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[1] In Romans ix. 13 Paul has occasion to refer to it (see on this, below).

10

In the weaker sense of "to be fond of" or "to like," the verb is not uncommon. Thus, the centurion is said to 'love' the Jewish nation (in Luke vii. 5), and when Balaam is said to have been fond of money, the phrase runs: *he liked* (*ἠγάπησεν*) *the profits of evil-doing* (2 Peter ii. 15). Similarly in Revelation xxii. 15—*he who loves and practises falsehood.* Again, *Woe to you Pharisees! you love* (*ἀγαπᾶτε*) *the front bench in the synagogues and salutations in the marketplaces* (Luke xi. 43). In Matthew's version of this saying (xxiii. 6) *φιλεῖν* is used instead of *ἀγαπᾶν.* Luke choses the latter synonym probably because he has just represented Jesus as denouncing the Pharisees for neglecting love to God (*τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ*, ver. 42). Hence the antithesis is apt. But it is significant that later he uses *φιλεῖν* in another version of the same saying: *the scribes . . . are fond of* (*φιλούντων*) *salutations in the marketplace and of front seats in the synagogue* (xx. 46). The fact is, these two terms had become practically synonymous in classical Greek by the time of Xenophon, although occasionally distinctions were drawn between them. Traces of the latter still survived in literary circles, as when Dio Cassius (40–115 A.D.), the Stoic rhetorician, makes Mark Antony remind the Romans after Caesar's death how *καὶ ἐφιλήσατε αὐτὸν ὡς πατέρα καὶ ἠγαπήσατε ὡς εὐεργέτην* (xliv. 48), where *ἀγαπᾶν* is the less intimate term. But in Hellenistic Greek the distinction had been gradually fading. Even in the Septuagint, Jacob's love for Joseph is indifferently expressed by both verbs (*φιλεῖν* in Genesis xxxvii. 4, *ἀγαπᾶν* in xliv. 20), and to describe those who 'love' God or the Divine Wisdom either verb is employed (*φιλεῖν* in Proverbs viii. 17, *ἀγαπᾶν* in ver. 21). Similarly, we only need to recall how the words of Proverbs iii. 12—*whom the Lord loves* (*ἀγαπᾷ*), *he disciplines*—are cited in Revelation iii. 19 with *φιλεῖν* for *ἀγαπᾶν*, though elsewhere (e.g. Hebrews xii. 6, Clem. Rom. lvi. 4) the Septuagint verb is retained. And not only God's love for man but man's love for God can be expressed by *φιλεῖν*, as in Paul's words: *if anyone has no love for* (*οὐ φιλεῖ*) *the Lord, God's curse be on him!* (1 Corinthians xvi. 22)—or again in Matthew x. 37: *he who loves* (φιλεῖν) *father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.*

The same width of use emerges in the Johannine Gospel and Epistles, where φιλεῖν and ἀγαπᾶν are often interchanged, so that it is impossible to contrast or distinguish them[1] without becoming ultra-subtle. Thus, *the Father loves you* (φιλεῖ) *himself* (αὐτός, i.e. αὐτόματος, *ultro*, of His own accord?), *because you have loved* (πεφιλήκατε) *me* (John xvi. 27); there is no real distinction between this and the meaning of xiv. 21: *he who loves me* (ἀγαπῶν . . . ἀγαπηθήσεται) *will be loved by my Father.* The same is true of the 'beloved disciple'; now ἀγαπᾶν (xiii. 23), now φιλεῖν (xx. 2), is employed. The only satisfactory explanation of such linguistic phenomena is that, whilst ἀγαπᾶν was the ordinary term in the Christian vocabulary, its older synonym φιλεῖν could still be employed for the sake of variety, as is plainly the case in xxi. 15–17. The interchange of the two verbs is so natural elsewhere that there is no reason to imagine any distinction between the two in the dialogue between Jesus and Peter. Here φιλεῖν and ἀγαπᾶν are synonyms. It is forced and fanciful to infer any fine distinction between them here or elsewhere in the NT, as though, for example, φιλέω meant no more than 'be a friend to,' whereas ἀγαπάω denoted the higher love of devotion. Peter is not represented here as claiming modestly no more than a natural affection or personal attachment, for in Hellenistic Greek the verb φιλέω is applied by Paul to the highest Christian love for the Lord (1 Corinthians xvi. 22) and in Revelation iii. 19 to the divine love for men, and in the Fourth Gospel itself the usage makes it impossible to suppose that the writer attached any special nuance to the one or to the other. Both are used, for example, to express the love of Jesus for his friend Lazarus (xi. 3, 5). When the writer wishes to say, *the Father loves the Son*, φιλέω and ἀγαπάω are employed quite indifferently (iii. 35, v. 20), just as in the case of the Father's love for Christians; both verbs express on occasion the lower love (iii. 19 and xii. 25), and in xii. 43 as well as in 1 John ii. 15 ἀγαπάω covers the lower no less than the higher objects of the heart's devotion. The use of φιλέω and ἀγαπάω in this dialogue is therefore no more than a literary variation, and to read anything recondite into it is to be subtle where simplicity is the mark of the writer's thought and expression.

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[1] Attempts are still made to distinguish between the two terms, most recently and ingeniously by Dr. E. A. Abbott in *Diatessarica* (1436, 1595–1596, 1716*d–f*, 1728*m–g*) and by Dr. B. B. Warfield in *The Terminology of Love in the New Testament* (reprint of two articles from *The Princeton Theological Review*, January and April 1918).

So congenial and comprehensive did ἀγαπᾶν become in the Christian vocabulary indeed, that φιλεῖν practically disappeared during the second century; there is barely a trace of it in the so-called Apostolic Fathers or in the apologists. The noun 'friendship' (φιλία) never became popular; 'love' supplied its place, and the only passage where φιλία occurs gives it in a sinister sense, as when one writer asks indignantly, *Know ye not that the world's friendship means enmity to God?* On the other hand, *friends* (φίλοι) was used occasionally, as a rule for Christians in general; thus it is an equivalent for ἀδελφοί in Acts xxvii. 3 (Paul allowed at Sidon to *visit his friends*) and in 3 John 15 (*the friends salute you; salute the friends by name*). If the Abercius-inscription be pagan, as Hepding assumes,[1] the passing reference there to the 'friends' may imply that 'friends' was sometimes the name for members of a religious cult; but this is dubious, and in any case there is no reason to suppose that in the Johannine usage such an antithesis is implied, when Jesus calls the disciples explicitly his 'friends.' To be God's friends meant to be loved by Him; to be

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[1] *Attis* (1903), pp. 84, 85. F. J. Doelger also regards φίλοι as equal to 'brothers' in the vocabulary of the cults (*Ichthus*, i. 134, 135).

‘friends’ meant the mutual love of the Christian community: this is all that the NT use of the term requires us to understand,[1] apart from the warning against becoming a friend of the world in James iv. 4 and 2 Clement vi. (*the present world and the world to come are two foes. This world speaks of adultery, corruption, love of money, and deceit, whereas that world bids such things farewell. We cannot then be friends of both*).

II

(*a*) The verb ἀγαπᾶν, however, had a stronger sense of ‘longing for’ or ‘desiring,’ which may afford the clue to one passage in the NT: ‘For this is your vocation, to bless and to inherit blessing;

he who would love Life
and enjoy good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking guile,’ etc.

The citation of this thirty-fourth psalm (verses 13–17) by Clement of Rome (xxii.) raises no difficulty, for he follows the LXX. But here in 1 Peter iii. 10 ff. the apostle makes a change which disturbs the run of the verse in this, his favourite psalm. Instead of ὁ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπῶν ἡμέρας ἰδεῖν ἀγαθάς, which may not be very good Greek but is an intelligible version of the original, we have ὁ θέλων ζωὴν ἀγαπᾶν καὶ ἰδεῖν ἡμέρας ἀγαθάς which leaves ἀγαπᾶν in an unusual sense and construction. As θέλων means moral choice, ἀγαπᾶν must denote either ‘enjoy’ or ‘devote himself to,’ neither of which is particularly obvious. Since Peter has eschatologized the quotation, Life means the future bliss of heaven, however, so that ‘love’ here might be taken in the same sense as in 2 Timothy iv. 8. ‘The man who sets his heart on Life, who makes up his mind to hold this heavenly Life the dearest aim and end, must look to his conduct here below'; such would be the point of the citation. The Life to come is to be loved, and loved not in sighs and raptures but by means of an unselfish, peaceable, and upright behaviour here and now; he who would *inherit blessing* at the end must make his life a blessing to others in the present community. The quotation is introduced in order to explain the saying of the apostle himself, *this is your vocation, to bless and to inherit blessing.*

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[1] See Harnack’s *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, ii. 419–421.

Love is applied similarly to the future in 2 Clement vi.: *We consider it better to hate things present, for small they are, short-lived, and corruptible, and to love things yonder, the good things that are incorruptible.*

(*b*) Another sense common in classical Greek recurs, viz. 'to prefer.' This use of ἀγαπᾶν continues as far down as Plutarch (e.g. *Camillus* 10, τὴν ἧτταν ἀγαπῆσαι πρὸ τῆς ἐλευθερίας), and the NT has several instances of the same usage. It is possible that this sense underlies the estimate passed upon Demas (in 2 Timothy iv. 10): *Demas, in his love for* (ἀγαπήσας) *this present world, has deserted me.* Certainly it emerges in such sentences as: *the Light has entered the world, and yet men have preferred* (ἠγάπησαν) *darkness to light* (John iii. 19), and *they preferred* (ἠγάπησαν) *the approval of men to the approval of God* (John xii. 43).

(*c*) The common sense of 'prize' or 'value' in classical Greek recurs in an OT citation like that in Hebrews i. 9: *thou hast loved justice.* Also the phrase about the loyal saints who *loved not their lives unto the death* (Rev. xii. 11) implies that ἀγαπᾶν means 'to cling to,' 'to prize highly.' Possibly this underlies the OT reminiscence of 2 Corinthians ix. 7, where Paul writes: *God loves* (ἀγαπᾷ) *the giver who gives cheerfully*, substituting ἀγαπᾷ for εὐλογεῖ in the LXX of Proverbs xxii. 8; but ἀγαπᾷ here might also mean 'has a warm affection for.'

(*d*) The analogous term στέργειν, denoting natural affection towards one's family and kinsfolk and even towards one's country, is not employed in the NT, although the negative adjective ἄστοργος twice occurs in the sense of 'callous,' as when Paul is describing pagans in Romans i. 31 (*false to their word, callous, unmerciful*), or when the author of the Pastorals (2 Timothy iii. 1 f.) predicts that *in the last days men will be ungrateful, irreverent, callous, relentless*, etc. The adjective implies that lack of the affection which is naturally due from man to man in such relationships. Such persons are unfeeling and hard, devoid of στόργη, the affection of which Epictetus writes in i. 11 and iii. 24 from the Stoic point of view. On the other hand, the positive adjective φιλόστοργος occurs once in Romans xii. 10: *put affection* (φιλόστοργοι) *into your love for the brotherhood*, and the noun recurs later in the *Epistle* to *Diognetus* (i.) as a term for Christian love: *the affectionate love* (φιλοστοργίαν) *they have for one another.* Paul's point is that the extension of love to the circle of fellow-believers must not be accompanied by any diminution of its warmth; it must retain the glow of family affection, instead of becoming formal. 'Dearly beloved brethren' is little more than a phrase in our modern liturgy, but in the primitive churches it originally represented the real greeting of those who were glad to meet as members of the one household of the faith. "Aimez-vous réciproquement d'une affection tendre et fraternelle," as Ostervald renders the Greek of Romans xii. 10. At the same time it is not without significance that already the apostle felt the need of urging this brotherly affection, and that those who required the admonition belonged to the Roman Church, where Christians who had been brought over from paganism in the Empire had no tradition behind them of personal religion in any intimate sense, for the Roman worship never stirred anything like the warmth of fellowship which Oriental cults like Mithraism and Judaism fostered in their adherents.

Paul's word in Romans indicates already the rise of the attitude which afterwards started the proverb about being as cold as charity. Brotherly love might give alms and assistance to the needy, without being inspired by genuine personal feeling. "There is a kind way of assisting our fellow-creatures which is enough to break their hearts while it saves their outer envelope" (Conrad, *Chance*, Part II, chap. 5). This danger is probably included in the apostle's warning against a formal affection.

The English Version renders φιλόστοργοι in Romans xii. 10 by 'kindly affectioned.' This is not an unhappy equivalent, for 'affection' in English may readily denote a sort of family feeling which has been trained through long intimacy and close intercourse. C. Abel, who notes this in his essay on the terminology of love in Latin, Hebrew, English, and Russian (*Sprachwissenschaftliche Abhandlungen*, pp. 31–104), also points out that of all the four languages Russian is the only one which possesses a special term, 'blagost,' for God's love to man.

12

More than once, in passing over into other languages, the NT has raised a crop of similar difficulties for translators. In the Latin version, for example, 'amor' was dropped in favour of 'dilectio' or 'caritas,' on account of its compromising pagan associations. Not entirely dropped, it is true, for there was no other equivalent for φιλαδελφία than 'amor fraternitatis' in 1 Peter i. 22 and 2 Peter i. 7, while the verb was too serviceable to be ignored, though in the main it is reserved for 'love' in its lower levels (e.g. at Matthew x. 37, xxiii. 6, John xii. 25, 2 Timothy iii. 2, Apoc. xxii. 15). Unworthy associations had evidently gathered round 'amor' as round 'erôs' in an earlier age. The Vulgate therefore prefers 'dilectio' or 'caritas,' especially the latter term, in the NT. There does not seem to be any strict principle in the choice of the terms, and Augustine was probably right in denying that there were any real distinctions between them, as though 'dilectio' meant 'regard' or 'charity' and 'caritas' or 'amor' a warmer affection. Incidentally he quotes John xxi. 15 to prove that the two terms used there for 'love' are no more than synonyms (*De Civitate Dei*, xiv. 7). It is indeed difficult to explain otherwise the apparently casual use of 'dilectio' and 'caritas' in the Latin versions. Why, for example, should Hebrews x. 24 have 'caritas' in the Vulgate and 'amor' in the Latin text of Codex Claromontanus? Why should the Vulgate have 'dilectio' for 'the love of God' in Judas 21 and John v. 42 and 'caritas' in Romans v. 5, 8, viii. 35, 39, etc.? Or 'dilectio' for 'mutual love' in Romans xii. 9 and 'caritas' in xiii. 10? Or 'caritas' in Ephesians vi. 23 and 'dilectio' in I Timothy i. 14, etc.? The Vulgate usage, however, naturally gave 'charity' a start, when the English versions began, particularly in the epistles; thus, in spite of the lead given by Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan version, 'charity' was adopted by the Authorized Version for I Corinthians xiii., though fortunately it did not agree with the Rheims version and the older Wyclif in speaking of 'the charity of God' in Romans v. 5. Bacon indeed praises the Rheims translators for adhering to 'charity' instead of using 'love.' As it happens, he is inaccurate, for the Rheims version, which like Wyclif followed the Vulgate closely, did employ 'love' now and then to translate 'dilectio.' But Bacon's comment is a proof that the English term 'love' appears to have acquired, in some circles of society at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the same sort of compromising flavour as 'erôs' and 'amor' in earlier periods. Finally, the changing usage of the language has made 'charity' itself ambiguous and equivocal. Two of its special meanings acquired such prominence that, as time went on, 'charity' (and 'charitable') was identified in popular use either with a generous, tolerant attitude towards other people, or with a benevolent spirit, shown mainly in almsgiving. The word thus came to be restricted to the wants and defects of people. Sir Thomas Browne could still say, without fear of misconception, "This, I think, is charity, to love God for Himself and our neighbours for God"; Jeremy Taylor could explain that "charity is friendship to all the world." But two centuries later things were different, and 'charity' eventually became so limited in popular acceptation that modern critical versions have no other alternative than to employ the generic 'love' invariably, since 'love' in the NT covers much more than a kindly, generous temper towards people who require for some reason or another to have allowances made for them, or a liberal disposition in helping the poor with money-gifts.

13

These data are not irrelevant, though they may seem of minor importance. It is to court misconception if one attempts to study 'love' or any other feature in the NT without some accurate linguistic and literary criticism; many of the current misunderstandings have arisen out of a failure to examine the terms employed and to ascertain their original associations, or again out of the tendency to regard NT texts as so many pieces which can be fitted into a mosaic of doctrine, irrespective of their origin. At the same time, if the lowest criticism be the method of treating any literature as though men lived by words alone, the highest criticism is the method of passing beyond manuscripts to men. Thus, in the present instance, there is no 'idea' of love in the NT literature. We find men loving strongly and freshly; that is the source of the conceptions about love, not any abstract principle. They do not love to be this or that, they love the Lord, or one another. In Jesus we come upon a vital personality moved and moving others by what is called 'love,' in the course of his mission, and the writers of the subsequent books reflect a life which is dominated by this spirit, not by abstract or ethical ideas about love. There is a reflection on its meaning now and then, but always reflection upon an experience created by the divine spirit of love in the Community. It is as if the writers said to themselves as they wrote,

What we have loved,
Others will love, and we will show them how.

The interest of their writings lies in the revelation of how they caught the spirit of love and transmitted it, how within the limitations of their age they entered with wonderful penetration into the significance of love as a vital power within the sphere of the Church, and in various ways worked it out. But never as a philosophical school or an ethical society. Jesus himself had loved and hated keenly—hated because he loved, hated intensely whatever challenged, misrepresented, and thwarted the divine purpose on earth. This was what inspired his followers in their communities, and as they acted upon the same principle they lived, and wrote of their life. In the Johannine circle especially there is indeed a reflective interpretation, but not in the sense of an impetus to detach love and study it apart from its manifestations. The Johannine writer or writers presuppose the synoptic tradition about Jesus, but it is not taken aside and elaborated into a philosophy of religion; rather the effort is to understand it as a revelation, so as to set free for a later generation the glowing heart and force of the divine message whose abiding significance was bound up with the Lord Jesus Christ.[1] For, from the very first, love in Christianity was an affection rather than an emotion; it involved mind and will in the Church as it lived and moved. In Paul and John pre-eminently the need for an intelligent appreciation of its meaning was realized, but invariably in connexion with its practice and action in the communities of the faith. What happened in ancient China might well have happened in primitive Christianity, had there not been a care for serious thought and reflection. "In the days of the great sovereigns even the lower orders had a knowledge of God and acted upon that knowledge. Their successors confined themselves to expressing their admiration and love for Him." So Laô-tsze declares in the seventeenth chapter of the *Tao-tih-King*.[1] The emotionalism of the first century in its religious cults might have infected the primitive communities with tendencies towards a similar degradation of religious faith had it not been for the ethical and reflective element which owed so much to the OT traditions of true religion. For the revelation of God in Jesus Christ was presented as an inspiration to knowledge as well as to adoring love. Belief in a God who was loving, as Christianity taught this, was indeed a revelation to the first century. The Roman who often felt that the gods cared to avenge but not to save, the Greek who thought of divine love, if he thought of it at all, as either a cosmic impersonal force or as an expression of divine favouritism, the pious votary of the cults who was offered a set of sensations as proof of divine favour to hapless mortality in the shape of a deification here and now—these and others discovered in the teaching of the Church a truth which shone by itself. Here was a God who loved freely and widely, without favourites and beyond all racial restrictions, a God who could be depended upon, whatever happened, a

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[1] Since writing this I notice what the modern evangelist, Jerry Macaulay, says (*Down in Water Street*, p. 85): "I have never stood before an audience without this vision inspiring me, 'If I can only make these people know who You are, they will love You too.'"

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[1] According to the rendering of Major-General G. G. Alexander (*Lao-tsze*, p. 67). Most interpreters understand 'sovereign rulers' or 'authorities,' not 'God'; and the text otherwise is uncertain.

God who had of His own will entered human life with a purpose that would not be defeated, a God with whom one had personal communion, a God who was both creator and redeemer, a God who was above Fate and the Stars, ruling men graciously instead of exposing them to caprice on His own part or to astrological cross-currents in the universe, a God, above all, whose love gave a meaning to life and history instead of leaving man to float in a welter of illusions or of casual vicissitudes. In these and other ways the adherent who came into the primitive Church found for the first time an adequate religion. But it challenged the mind as well as satisfying the heart. It came with mental and religious categories which had to be re-interpreted as time went on; it was liable to serious misconception in minds which had brought to it prepossessions of their own; and it invariably demanded thoughtfulness even from those who were not capable of entering into its deeper meaning. The interesting thing is to observe how amid all their idiosyncrasies, the NT writers are conscious that the heart of this revelation lies in what they commonly called 'love.' Their pages show how some of the inevitable difficulties were being faced, whether they referred to the comprehension of the religious truth involved or to the practice of this moral holiness in the new life.

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One of Calvin's deep words about Christianity is that every promise of God is an attestation of His love (promissionem quamlibet esse divinae erga nos dilectionis, *Instit.* III. ii. 32). In a real sense the scope and essence of love are embodied in the entire revelation. But, without ignoring this consideration, we may confine ourselves to the specific use of love-terms in the NT. The method of the following inquiry is determined by the character of the material thus presented. In the NT 'love' is one or other of three things, God's love to man, man's love to God, and man's love to his fellow-man; the data are handled in this order. But the NT presents the rise of the Christian religion in phases; there is a unity, but the unity cannot be understood until the various phases and stages of the development have been analysed. The documents may be provisionally grouped as follows. There is (*a*), first of all, the teaching of Jesus as preserved in the synoptic gospels. This may be fairly taken as the primary phase; even although the synoptic gospels do contain the reflection of the apostolic Church upon the tradition which is thus transmitted, and even although the Johannine tradition cannot be rigidly separated from it, still it is possible, by analysing this synoptic tradition, to reach an original transcript of what Jesus was believed to have taught and done. Then (*b*) there are sufficient documents to enable us to ascertain the mind of the apostle Paul. I take even the epistle to the Ephesians within this group of writings, for, while it may not have been written by the apostle, it voices an attitude which, for our purpose, is sufficiently close to his mind to be called Pauline. The Pastoral Epistles, on the other hand, represent for the most part a later development, which may be included within (*c*) the literature of the general Church, along with earlier or contemporary writings like the Epistles of Peter, Judas, James, Hebrews, and the Book of Acts. Finally (*d*), there is the Johannine phase, to be deduced from the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles. Here again, the book of Revelation is now in the sphere of the primitive general Church, now in the specifically Johannine group, for none of the four phases can be rigidly isolated, not even the Johannine. Still, the fourfold division is not only convenient but, on the whole, accurate, and it will be found that the fundamental conceptions of love in all four are remarkably similar. The emphasis varies, naturally. But in all essentials the idea of 'love' is true to itself, though when Christianity is spoken of as the religion of love, this means in reality

Christianity as presented in the Pauline or in the Johannine form, where all three phases of its content are explicitly stated and held together.

The synoptic tradition preserves the data about the life and teaching of Jesus, i.e. down to A.D. 33. What he was and did became of as much importance to the Church as what he had taught, and both enter into these records. The Pauline letters cover the next thirty years, though for the most part they seem to have been composed during the decade preceding A.D. 60 or 65. The literature grouped under the title of 'The Primitive Church' comes from the years between 65, when the First Epistle of Peter was written, and the beginning of the second century; the documents rise from scattered sources, but, though they are of minor importance theologically, they are not necessarily less significant than the Pauline interpretation of the catholic faith for an estimate of love in the communities at large. The Johannine literature may be placed approximately towards the close of the first century, though there is no reason why the two smaller letters of the Presbyter may not have been written earlier. This literature is of special importance for our subject, not simply because it contains the most detailed estimate of love, but because it exhibits at the end of the classical period an indomitable assurance of vitality. A tract like the First Epistle of John, for example, which is an epitome of love in its varied aspects, has nothing wistful about it; the homily is written at a long remove from the first days, but, so far from reflecting any consciousness of a weakening force, it thrills with the belief that the day of this love divine is only dawning. Indeed, if one desires to read a tract on Christian love which sets forth concisely, with a heightened, intense accent, the sense in which genuine members of the Church understood it, towards the end of the first century, there is nothing better than the manifesto called the First Epistle of John. It is brief, it is written with the authentic note of authority, and it covers the essential features of what was meant by 'love.' Thus, God's love for us is shown by imparting sonship or new life in His household (iii. 1, 2), and by the self-sacrifice of the Lord (iii. 16); both of these convictions are held together in the statement (iv. 9 f.) that God's love appeared in the mission of His Son, to die for our sins, *so that by him we might live.* As for our love to God, in return, this is three times over linked to brotherly love (iii. 16 f., iv. 12, 20 f.), and three times linked to the thought of obedience rendered to the orders of God (ii. 4 f., 15 f., v. 1, 2), whilst the last-named passage unites both by presenting brotherly love as the sum and substance of the divine orders or commands for human life. Furthermore, the norm for this moral discipline of life under God's orders in the Church is found in the example and inspiration of Jesus Christ (ii. 8, iii. 16, 23, etc.); the true Christian *ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.* The possibility of such a high life lies in the fellowship enjoyed by the Christian with God and his fellow-believers; not only is the one side of this fellowship unattainable apart from the other, but moral obedience is conditioned by an inward union in which those who by love and obedience identify themselves with the Lord know Him as the indwelling power of their lives. They are *in God*, or dependent vitally on Him, as they believe in Jesus Christ and keep the law of love; to put it otherwise, they keep His commands as they have intercourse with Him, for His life transforms and moulds theirs. The imitation of the historical Jesus as the Lord of love is thus taken up into a living fellowship with Him, so that, as time goes on, "Jesus is ever present with his people, even nearer to them than he was in the first days, and they can hold communion with him, and with God through him."[1]

If this does not represent average Christianity in the primitive churches, it illustrates what was regarded as essential. When a primitive Christian spoke or thought of himself as loved by God, he meant the experience of personal intercourse with a God who Himself desires such intercourse, and who fulfils it in a communion with the entire personality. The desire of God was expressed in the mission of His Son Jesus Christ, and, like true love, did not shrink from self-sacrifice in order to benefit the beloved. Such love was so sublime that it outwent any experience of human love. Indeed, the primitive Christian often thought and spoke of his response not as 'love,' though God's love as love desires a return of love, but as adoring confidence, humble faith, reverent submission. For even the experience of love in human relationships soon shows that it may be mutual without being equal—love for one's country, for example, or, better still, the love of husband and wife, of parent and child; there is something in each case which is received, but which cannot be exactly returned. And so far from this being a defect, it is rather the strength of the relationship. Similarly with man's love to God: the divine love was felt to be so infinitely and incomparably greater that devout Christians from the first were often reserved in using the same word for their utter and whole-hearted response to Him. Yet one thing at least is common both to God's love for us and to our love for one another. It is not the least of the profound services rendered by early Christianity that it set forth brotherly love as no mere appendix to religion, but as an organic phase of its vitality. Jesus chose to make this brotherly consideration the test of religious faith, and, whatever differences in theological outlook separate the NT writers, they are at one in accepting and urging this test. *He that loveth not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?* 'Ah,' said Vinet drily, in the midst of quarrels that tore the Swiss Church—'ah, but it is just the brother whom one has seen, whom it is so difficult to love!' Precisely. But it is only by confronting the difficulties of such intercourse that any love for God is possible—at least on the lines of the NT. And it is here that the consciousness of God's love throws light upon the duty of loving the exasperating or unattractive 'brother' in the community, for in both cases the end sought is not simply smooth relations or happiness but moral welfare Those who have the experience of God's kind but searching love possess not merely the motive for brotherly love, but the standard. Since the object of God's love in us is life, i.e. the realization of His ends in our personality, the object of our love for the brothers must be to further in them the ends of God, as we have opportunity. This reveals the serious nature of the relationship. Furthermore, as it is not a question of liking them, the exercise of the will comes in, just as it does in our love for God, by disciplining ourselves to loyalty and checking indifference. In either case we are dealing with an affection which touches our entire personality, which makes inexorable demands, and which takes no superficial view of moral weakness. It is not incongruous, therefore, to speak of such love being commanded. No one can be commanded or argued into love, in the romantic sense of the term; there are, in the last resort, no reasons for such love, and the commands which it obeys it prefers to lay upon itself. But since love as an affection of loyalty to God or to our fellows requires reflection and also more or less pressure from the will upon the lower nature, since it implies a controlling sense of the end in view and often a deliberate resolve not to choose what would be inconsistent with the higher loyalty, the NT could speak of God commanding us to love, for such love means self-denial, to which we must make up our minds at critical moments. Thus it becomes reasonable to understand the law of brotherly love as a command, for we fulfil this obligation by maintaining belief in our fellows, by refusing to admit that they have forfeited every chance by their misconduct, and by endeavouring, however unpleasant and thankless may be the task, to treat them in such a way as to awaken in them some sense of the divine purpose for their lives.

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[1] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 367.

These are no more than glimpses of the love which the NT discloses ; but they are sufficient to indicate that we are here face to face with a religious reality which makes an incessant demand upon the mind and the will, and which, so far from being the uncommon accomplishment of the saintly temper, lies at the very heart of the common faith that first won the name of 'Christian.'

'Mysticism' is such a question-begging term that it is better avoided as a description of such love, even in its heightened phases. There is the intenser form of religion which not only penetrates below any formal and external expression, but attains a rapturous insight beyond direct experience ; this is a mood which corresponds to the quality that distinguishes Wordsworth from Pope, or, to take an older parallel, Plato from Xenophon. It is more easily felt than defined, but it is real. In this sense, and this sense alone, one may speak of a 'faith-mysticism' in Paul, for example. Yet such a range is recognized by writers like those who composed the Epistle of James or the Epistle to the Hebrews. On the other hand, there is a quest of the Infinite or the Absolute by means of intuition, as though the innate powers of the soul attained God by some convulsive leap across the bounds of consciousness or intelligence. This is a transcendentalism which was already in the air, long before Neo-Platonism was formulated. The Stoic pantheism, for example, produced a vague cosmic mysticism, in the days of the primitive Church, which made religious men feel as though they 'lived and moved and had their being in' (i.e. in dependence on) the Deity of the World-Spirit.[1] The astral philosophy also tended towards a mystical religion of transcendental quality. Both of these developments ripened in the later Church a love-mysticism which was Christian in language rather than in spirit. On the other hand, as we see in the Odes of Solomon, there was a type of thought which could not only develop the conception of Christ as the Word on lines independent of Philonism, but gather round it love-emotions of the warmest kind, till Christianity approximated to a Jesus-mysticism. This again is represented later, in a variety of forms, some of them more wholesome than others. It would be rash to exclude them from Christianity, for who can tell how the awakened mind of devotion will move under the Spirit of the living Lord? The powers and desires of the soul may take this line and that, as experience advances. Nevertheless, the double danger is always present, the danger of ignoring God, and the danger of so 'spiritualizing' Jesus as to reduce His human personality and value. The latter was the risk felt in the movement which is reflected by the First Epistle of John. For the so-called 'docetism' which shrank from connecting Jesus with actual experience of pain and death was more than a phase of gnostic philosophy; it was due to an exaggerated stress on the spiritual Christ as the object of devotion, and it led to the later effort to detach the idea or principle of Christian love from its historical setting. Love-mysticism on such lines revealed itself as an implicit departure from the faith, no matter how excellent were its motives. It was indeed the sense of this which led the early Church to emphasize the proof from prophecy, for this reliance on history prevented the faith from becoming an idealistic philosophy, and rooted love in the experience of the Church as a revelation of the divine purpose.

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[1] E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, pp. 21–23.

PART A

THE TEACHING OF JESUS IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

I

IN the teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the synoptic tradition, there is much more of the spirit than of the letter of 'love.' Jesus never speaks directly of God as Love, or as loving men. The truth is implied rather than stated, and when it is stated it is generally put in other terms. Thus, Jesus assumes that God is loving when he speaks of Him as Father, and when he bases the claim for mutual love among his personal followers on the character of the Father as the inspiration and exemplar of such love. *You must be perfect* (τέλειοι), *as your Father in heaven is perfect* (Matthew v. 48). The only other passage in which τέλειος occurs is the counsel to the rich young man (*if you want to be perfect* . . . , Matthew xix. 21); there it means 'whole-hearted' or utterly devoted to God.[1] This is not precisely the same as the meaning in v. 48, where Matthew's language is at once wider, since it includes God in the concept of τέλειος, and at the same time, as the context shows, more specific. It is plain that a child cannot be 'perfect' in precisely the same sense as his father; but the argument turns on the quality of love as giving and forgiving, and a child in the household is 'perfect' as he shares the spirit inspired by the father of the household, the spirit of generous affection, or, as Francis of Assisi put it, "the great Courtesy of God." Luke's version is probably nearer to the meaning of the original: *The Most High is kind* (χρηστός) *even to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful* (οἰκτίρμονες), *as your Father is merciful* (vi. 36), where 'merciful' is the attitude of lovingkindness even towards the undeserving, not simply of power sparing the weak, nor even of kindness shown to those in need of help. Quite apart from this verbal variation, however, the general implication of the passage is that the adherents of Jesus are expected to reproduce the character of God the Father, that character being in this aspect one of absolutely disinterested lovingkindness.

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[1] As in Deuteronomy xviii. 13: τέλειος ἔσῃ ἐναντίον κυρίου, where τέλειος (*tamim*) is equivalent to ἅγιος.

Christians who came over from paganism to the primitive Church would not be unfamiliar with such a plea for moral likeness to God. It was a current doctrine of the warmer philosophical religion, from Plato to Musonius and onwards, never put more persuasively than by Epictetus in the second century (ii. 14, 11–13). "First, you must learn this, that God exists and cares for (προνοεῖ) all things. . . . Next, you must learn what is the nature of the gods, for as they are found to be, so must he try to resemble them who would please and obey them. If the Deity is loyal, he must be loyal too . . . if beneficent, man must also be beneficent; if magnanimous, man must also be magnanimous; he must therefore both act and speak consistently as an imitator (ζηλωτής) of God." Thus did the Stoics moralize the conception of God as goodness and providence. Seneca himself could argue (*De Beneficiis*, iv. 26): 'Si deos imitaris, da et ingratis beneficia, nam et sceleratis sol oritur, et piratis patent maria'!

But the Stoic deity was the cohesive principle of the universe rather than a God like the Father of whom Jesus spoke, and far more close to the minds of his hearers was the truth of moral likeness to God as it had been taught in Jewish piety. It is upon this that Jesus draws. Only, he makes a tacit and significant alteration by refraining from any use of the OT phrase, *Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.* The deep sense of reverence and awe for God is expressed by the term 'Father,' with its royal connotation, but Jesus never explicitly calls God 'holy,' probably because the term in his day seemed to be associated with a particularism which tended to emphasize unduly the aloofness of the transcendent God from sinful men and especially from non-Israelites. The one allusion to the divine holiness comes in the wake of a stress upon the Fatherhood of God: *Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.* God's name is hallowed as men live for His honour, make His glory the rule and end of their lives, and identify themselves with His will. This contemporary expression for what is meant by 'love to God' is drawn out by the conception of God as the high and heavenly Father, revealed by Jesus as his Father and the Father of all who are willing to enter into his real realm and order of righteousness or love.

I

As God the Father is one to whom the followers of Jesus owe reverence and duty in their affection for Him, the character which elicits this affection must have the supreme qualities of authority and loving interest, eliciting awe and confidence. The fact that Jesus avoids the current term 'holy' in speaking of God is significant; it points to the need he felt for using other terms to express the same truth of God's high majesty, terms which would not conflict with the truth of His fatherly relation to those who accepted his authority. Both holiness and love, as used of God, had some particularistic associations which were alien to his belief as it moved beyond the environment of Judaism, and associations which were more than particularistic. Therefore in the synoptic tradition Jesus does not speak even of God loving his personal followers, for such love, in which he deeply believed, meant more than loyalty to their interests as members of the Jewish nation. It is in this connexion that his use of the term 'Father' for God requires to be very carefully watched. God is for Jesus the

Father of those who share his fellowship, not of all men generally. The disciples to whom and of whom Jesus speaks, when he is thinking of God as Father, were the group of disciples whom, like Isaiah in an earlier age, he had gathered as the true nucleus of the People, but not because they were by birth members of Israel, much less because they were human beings created by God. God's relation to them is fatherly, in the sense that He cares for them personally and gives them freely the right of membership in the Realm or Reign, but only as they give themselves to the rule of His will, seeking His realm and righteousness first and foremost. It is they and they alone who are given the prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven." How could others use it, who had no interest in the coming of the real Kingdom? It is a prayer for those who invoke Him as the royal Father with a Realm in which His orders of the new and higher 'righteousness' are the paramount consideration (being orders of love), or a great Household in which the sons are active in service. In other words, the Fatherhood of God as applied by Jesus to men implies the moral and ethical relationships which Jesus inspired in his group of personal followers, of whom therefore God approved. Membership in this group was indeed open to all; this is the invariable conviction of the NT, which is implicit in the teaching of Jesus himself, and in this sense the fatherliness of God for all men may be held; but nowhere is there any trace of the idea that men by birth are, as such, sons of God or brothers one of another in the full sense of these terms. Thus Paul, who was convinced of God's love for sinful men as men, without distinction of race and class, never calls any 'sons of God' except those who have accepted the gospel, and even they are adopted children, taken into the Family by God's gracious love; the fellowship and communion which 'Father and sons' implies is explicitly based upon the religious position of Redeemer and redeemed. Similarly, in the Johannine circle the term 'sons of God' is actually dropped in favour of 'children of God,' owing to the sense that 'Son of God' ought to be reserved for Jesus Christ alone; but 'children of God' remains still a term for believers and believers only. God 'loved the world' indeed, but even Christians are not called 'sons of God the Father,' much less are men, all and sundry, designated by this term. This may sound like an anticipation of what we have yet to see, but it is essential to note at the outset that the trend of the NT along this line begins with Jesus himself, who addressed a special group when he spoke to them of 'your Father' or 'your Father in heaven.' The fact is, as I have elsewhere shown,[1] the distinctive factor in Christianity was Jesus teaching not that God was the Father of men but that He was his Father; it was in virtue of this unique consciousness of Sonship that Jesus called men to come to himself and learn the open secret of belonging to the Father. He was the Son of God in order to bring men into real sonship.[2] So far as this could be done by teaching, he did so, in the words preserved by the synoptic tradition, although more than words were required to enable them to enter into the redeeming purpose and love of the Father. To grasp the core of his teaching on this point, we must recognize that God is called the royal Father, not because He created men, nor because He rules them as the Moral Governor of the universe, but as they stand towards Him in the moral relation of kinship and dependence revealed by Jesus. This is one reason why in Paul, as in John, the thought of the Family of God becomes more dominant than that of the Realm, since the former conception of religion was thought to bring out the idea which, though already present in the synoptic conception of the Realm, might be misunderstood by ordinary people, the idea that a saving relationship to God depended upon His revelation in Jesus Christ as accepted by faith, not upon any adherence to a messianic programme which might connote an independent ethical effort or a nationalistic aim.

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[1] *The Theology of the Gospels*, pp. 99 f.

[2] "Dieser messianismus ruht auf . . . einem eigentümlichen religiösen Verhältnis zum Vater, den der Sohn kennet und der sein Vater ist im Unterschiede von dem Verhältnis aller andern zum Vater" (Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 323).

One writer can speak of God as *the Father* (i.e. the Maker) *of the heavenly lights* (James i. 17) in a passing protest against belief in astrological fatalism, just as contemporary Jews blessed God for being 'the Creator of the luminaries.' Another can remind Christians that God is the creator of their spiritual beings, *the Father of our spirits* (Hebrews xii. 10), and therefore deserving of humble honour and submission. But otherwise the NT writers refrain from anything like a suggestion that God was the Father or Creator of men. This tallies with the avoidance of divine love as connected with creation.

In 2 Corinthians iii. 18 Marcion read *the Lord of spirits* (πνευμάτων) instead of πνεύματος, as Tertullian proves (*Adv. Marc.*, v. 11). But even if *spirits* here denotes angels, it cannot have this meaning in Hebrews xii. 10.

The conception of God as the Father of Christians dies away indeed from some quarters of primitive Christianity—there is not a trace of it in the book of Revelation, for example; but no NT book connects the divine Fatherhood with creation (see above, p. 42), though Philo's view of God *the Father of the universe* does appear in Clement of Rome (xix. 2, *the Father and Creator of the whole world*; xxxv. 3, *the Creator and Father of the ages*).

God's fatherly love is commonly expressed in connexion with the Realm or Reign, i.e. with the community or fellowship founded by Jesus for God's sovereign purpose. (i) He is not indifferent to the practical needs of life: 'You care for His Realm supremely, and He will care for you,' is the theme of a passage like Matthew vi. 25–34. (ii) Though the godly, who have joined the cause of Jesus, receive God's goodness in sun and rain, in the outward blessings of Nature, their real bliss is in the gift of God's personal care and kingdom, of which they may be sure ; *do not seek food and drink and be worried* (or, *unsettled*) *; pagans make food and drink their aim in life, but your Father knows quite well you need that ; only seek his Realm, and it will be yours over and above. Fear not, you little flock, for your Father is delighted to give you the Realm* (Luke xii. 29–32), i.e. to make you partakers in His sovereignty over His people in the world. (iii) His help in trouble, i.e. under persecution and against temptation, and (iv) His free forgiveness of sins, are also promises, as expressions of His Fatherly kindness. In a word, drawing upon His own intuitions and experience, Jesus teaches that God the Father is living and loving, a royal Authority who can be implicitly trusted by loyalists, one who stands in a direct relationship of goodwill and generosity to His own.

The saying preserved in Luke xii. 32 may have originally been spoken elsewhere, but it has an apt context here : 'Do not be afraid to *seek the Realm* of God the Father, as though it were a prize beyond reach of a group so small and uninfluential ; *fear not, you little flock, for your Father is delighted to give you the Realm ;* His goodwill is yours, whatever appearances may be to the contrary.' Only, Jesus at once adds (vers. 33 f.), you have to prepare yourselves for this great gift. The words are an encouragement to a group which feared it was beneath God's regard. Here and in Matthew xxvi. 41 Jesus seems to think of himself as shepherding the small circle of disciples ; but the main point of the saying lies in the assurance of God's free will of love towards them.

On the other hand, the royal Father in heaven is no easy-going deity, but One whose demands are for whole-hearted service, with stern penalties not only for those who refuse the demands, but for those who accept them and fail to obey them.

"There is nothing inexorable but love," as Carlyle once said, and the moral demands of God as revealed by the synoptic Jesus are searching and stringent. This relation of men to Him is crucial. Under His order of providence, men may do certain things which will undo them ; such was the stern truth which Jesus taught. Measured by conventional standards of religion or of morals, these offences may not seem very serious ; in some cases they are not thought serious at all, and it is possible to defend them ingeniously. But, once done, they drag life down to ruin, Jesus holds. There is (*a*) the unpardonable sin of misrepresenting the cures and purpose of Jesus ; the malignant attitude of the scribes, who would attribute his good deeds to collusion with the devil rather than acknowledge the working of the Spirit, is passionately pronounced by him to be a sin beyond pardon either here or in the hereafter. The deliberate rejection of his mission of love and mercy, as an action of God, is declared to be decisive for the fate of the deniers. His works accredit him to any sincere soul, it is implied, and to reject him therefore is to incur the doom of God. *Whosoever thus shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.* Again (*b*), the sin of upsetting the faith of the weak and immature, the sin of providing stumblingblocks, is adjudged fatal : *whoever is a hindrance to one of these little ones who believe, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung round his neck and be thrown into the sea.* This was a Roman punishment as well as a Phoenician and Syrian, which Jesus may have witnessed, for it is said that Herod punished criminals by drowning them in the Sea of Galilee. But the moral point is, that such a denunciation is the other side of his loving care for the weak and inexperienced who would easily be misled and disturbed in their religious trust. (*c*) The sin of heartlessness was another form of wrongdoing against love, which he pronounced damning. For a wealthy man to neglect a poor man at his gates, and to pass through life indifferent to human need and misery around him, was to inherit hell without hope of rescue. The callous rich man in the story *died and was buried*, and then we see him beyond death, being tortured in Hades for ever. (*d*) So with the sin of cowardice, which amounted to a denial of God through undue love of self: *I tell you, my friends, have no fear of those who kill the body but after that can do no more; I will show you whom to fear—fear Him who after he has killed has power to cast you into Gehenna.* This God is the heavenly Father who cares lovingly for His own, one by one, but He is none the less a God of sovereign inexorable demands upon courage, love, and faith; both conceptions of God are needed in order to understand Him.

Have no fear of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul;
rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.
Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?
Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unless your Father wills it.
The very hairs on your head are all numbered;
fear not, then, you are worth far more than sparrows.

Or, to illustrate the sternness of God towards the unforgiving temper—at the end of the parable of the unmerciful servant, Jesus tells how *in hot anger his master handed him over to the torturers, till he should pay him all the debt. My heavenly Father will do the same to you unless you each forgive your brother from the heart.* 'My heavenly Father.' The Christian is a Christian because he has received full, free forgiveness from the Father; but—so the parable teaches—if he is not prepared to extend the same pardon to a fellow-Christian, he will find that the Father is stern and merciless to him.

2

Once ἀγαπᾶν is employed to describe the feeling of Jesus himself. When he looked at the so-called 'rich young ruler,' with his eager enthusiasm and high moral character, Jesus *loved him*, Mark (x. 21) relates: *ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐμβλέψας αὐτῷ ἠγάπησεν αὐτόν.* As in Modern Greek *φιλεῖν* may mean 'to kiss,' so here, it has been argued, *ἠγάπησεν* should be rendered by 'caressed' or 'embraced.' Indeed, one Latin MS. reads 'osculatus est,' as though Jesus acted like a rabbi who would rise and kiss a pupil for some good answer. But whilst *ἀγαπᾶν* might mean 'caress,' here it probably covers no more than the inward impulse of admiring affection. Jesus felt instinctively drawn to this clean, earnest character. The man's fine, moral personality attracted him, and he responded by giving him the opportunity of a more exacting special vocation. *Jesus loved him and said to him, Go and sell all you have; give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, take up the cross, and follow me.* That is, he disturbed the man's self-satisfaction by making a special, higher demand upon him, and by honouring him with this ampler opportunity. As in the case of his own title of *Beloved*, so here; divine love carries with it a moral discipline and service.

3

For the sense of vocation comes out in the special use of *Beloved* as applied to Jesus at the baptism and the transfiguration. The divine voice hails him thus: *Thou art my Son, the Beloved; in thee is my delight*, the latter phrase denoting the seal of God's approval. At the baptism it is the consciousness of a specific relationship to God, that of Son to Father, which is ratified, and through this the vocation of messiah is realized. The consciousness of sonship and service to the Father lies behind the messianic vocation; the latter rests—this is the assumption of the gospels—upon a sense of unique sonship to the Father, which assumed the specific form of messianic vocation. *The Beloved* is a title which holds both thoughts together; it corresponds to the messianic vocation which as

The Elect he carries out, but, as the words *in thee is my delight* indicate, it also is meant to suggest the personal relationship to the Father which he alone enjoys. Both here and at the transfiguration where the words recur (*This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him*), the nexus of thought lies in the conception of God's love for the Son opening into a vocation for him as the Servant of God in the mission of the divine realm on earth, carrying out the Father's purpose for men. In other words, the idea of the love of God here as elsewhere issues immediately in service of the divine will. The same thought is implied in the use of the term by Jesus when he speaks in a later parable about the owner of the vineyard sending finally *a beloved son*; the previous servants had been maltreated, but *he had still one servant left, a beloved son* (Mark xii. 6). Here *beloved* means 'specially prized and dear,' for the sense of uniqueness has been already brought out in *one*. And, again, the beloved son is at the command of the father; the mission assigned him is a proof of the father's affection and confidence, a mission which, it is implied, he will be forward to obey. When the synoptic tradition took shape, it was assumed that Jesus was the unique Son of the Father, and this was expressed in terms of the Servant of God conception, which involved a personal relationship of mutual love issuing in a mission of obedience and service.[1]

It is indeed tempting to take the Greek term ἀγαπητός here in its idiomatic sense of 'only.'[2] In classical Greek it denoted an only child, for one had to be content (ἀγαπᾶν) with such. But even in the LXX ἀγαπητός as applied to an only son suggested one loved or prized with special affection, as in Genesis xxii. 2, etc., where Isaac is called *thy son, thine*

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[1] This is what Matthew (xii. 18) and Luke (ix. 35, see xxiii. 35) mean by the title *The Chosen* or *Elect One*, which was soon added by some authorities to *Son of God* in John i. 34.

[2] As urged by C. H. Turner lately in the *Journal of Theological Studies* (xxvii. 113–129).

only son, whom thou lovest. In the primitive Church there is no doubt as to the sense in which the term was used as a title of Christ. Thus Paul, who has the Genesis passage in mind, as he speaks of the unique Son of God, deliberately substitutes the unambiguous term ἴδιος. When he wishes to speak of Christ as God's Beloved, he employs a periphrasis like *son of His love* or *Beloved* (ἠγαπημένος). The reason why he never calls Christ the Beloved (ἀγαπητός) is because he used ἀγαπητός freely of fellow-Christians. For him ἴδιος, not ἀγαπητός, corresponded to what John meant by μονογενής, when Jesus was called *the* Son. The synonym ἠγαπημένος, used in the LXX of Israel as God's dear Son, was transferred like Servant and Elect to the Messiah as God's Son. Indeed in the early apocalypses combined in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, 'Beloved' appears quite freely as the title of Christ, and even in the Jewish fragment (i. 2, 5) of that document it is not invariably a Christian addition.[1] The evidence of Matthew (xii. 18) and Luke (ix. 35) shows that Beloved was interchangeable with Elect as a description of Jesus, and in the light of such first-century evidence (for part of the Christian *Ascension of Isaiah* is first century) as well as of the old Latin and Syriac versions, it is likely that the use of ἀγαπητός in the synoptic tradition as a term for Jesus is in line with what Paul and other contemporary writers assumed. *The Son* was as a rule by itself a sufficiently distinctive term for the unique divine sonship of Jesus; when *beloved* was added, it meant what it means in English, instead of merely underlining the truth that He was the One unique Son of the Father. The Johannine development of the love of the Father for the Son was due to the fact that ἀγαπητός had already acquired this sense in the tradition; it was not simply an expansion of the Pauline usage.

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[1] See Eugène Tisserant's *Ascension d'Isaïe* (1909), pp. 59 f.

4

The idea of sin as unfaithfulness to the divine love for the People only emerges incidentally in the phrase about *this evil and adulterous generation*, where *adulterous* corresponds to the thought of Hosea about Israel's sin being a disloyalty to the Lord who loved her. In Matthew (xii. 39, xvi. 4) the particular sin is the craving for a sign from heaven, whereas in Mark (viii. 38) the reference is general: *Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this disloyal and sinful generation.* This metaphorical use of μοιχαλίς as 'unfaithful,' derived from the prophetic idea of the People as the Bride or Beloved of the Lord (Romans ix. 25, 1 Peter ii. 10), is quite incidental in the synoptic tradition, however, and when the idea of the Church as the divine Bride reappears, as it does in Paul and John, the primary source is as likely to be apocalyptic as prophetic, though it is possible that such passing use of the phrase as Jesus makes may be due to his familiarity with Hosea. The one specific use of the term elsewhere is by James, in denouncing worldly-minded Christians as *wanton creatures* (μοιχαλίδες), which certainly comes nearer to the prophetic sense of unfaithfulness as idolatry. In the synoptic use, the unfaithfulness consists in demanding a signal of supernatural origin which would indicate that God's power was in action; this was for Jesus a denial of his divine mission as the one sign, and a craving for what would dispense with sympathetic faith. In the Marcan passage *adulterous* connotes the cowardice which made men decline to receive or to preach his messianic gospel as being too hard. Luke in his version always omits *adulterous*, as unintelligible for a general audience in the Empire.

5

To the question, why did Jesus mention God's love so seldom?, an answer has been sought in several directions.

(*a*) Perhaps he could take it for granted, like belief in God's existence, among the devout of his day. (*b*) Or again, at exactly the opposite pole, it has been suggested that he avoided it, because it was apt to be bound up with particularism; that is, instead of silently assuming it as a fundamental principle of religion, he eschewed any allusion to it, on account of its popular identification with Yahweh's covenant-love for Israel. "If the Jew did not say, 'God is Love,' he felt and said that God is loving, although in the word he used there was an historic and often half-conscious reference to God's love for Israel as the basis and source of His love for the individual Israelite"[1]—a reference from which Jesus would instinctively shrink. (*c*) A third explanation is, that the comparative scantiness of the synoptic references to God's love is accidental, that Jesus did refer to it more often, and that this is one of the features of his teaching which have been preserved in the richer allusions scattered throughout the Johannine tradition. (*d*) But, while (*b*) has truth in it, the most probable, though not necessarily the exclusive, answer is, that he chose to express the truth otherwise. Jesus was not tied to words. The gospels are full of encouragement and confidence; their pages reflect a Life that braced and rallied men; yet the word 'hope' never occurs upon the lips of Jesus. So with love, it may be argued. The elements of the Divine Love are present, at their highest form of expression, even although the term is absent. And furthermore, Jesus taught God's love by his life no less than by his words. The very ministry and mission of Jesus was the best proof that God in love was about to inaugurate the supreme order of bliss among men. Thus Jesus acted for God in seeking and saving the lost, in simplifying religion, in proving by his actions as well as by his words that the human individual had eternal value and possibilities for God, and that, however unlovely and loveless it might be, human life was worth loving. It was particularly in dealing with the sinful and degraded that he revealed the Divine Love as a will of good. Under no illusions about their moral position, he went to them freely, not with any sentimental pity for them as victims of the social order, nor as an agitator to stir up one class against another, but with the offer of what poor sinners need most, belief in their power to amend, under the touch of genuine interest and affection.

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[1] C. G. Montefiore's *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 442.

It is against criticisms and misunderstandings of this action that Jesus speaks the three stories of the Woman and the Lost Coin, the Shepherd and the Lost Sheep, and particularly the Father and his Two Sons (in Luke xv.). The Pharisees and the scribes thought he was too easy-going. They were complaining because he welcomed the morally outcast so freely, and associated with them outside the respectable and law-abiding pale. He tells these tales to illustrate the natural joy of the divine love in seeking out souls that have dropped from their true place in life, and in the third tale specially he criticizes the heartless attitude of the religious authorities, who may be blameless in their obedience to the law, but are so unsympathetic that they cannot enter into the inner heart of God. The self-righteous pride of the older brother is a foil to the spirit of the father; it is implied that no father would display such unrighteous pride and harshness as the older brother does. Jesus as usual argues *a fortiori* from men to God; in vers. 11–24 this genuine love is described, and then (25–32) it is defended against those who imagine that thereby the interests of true religion are compromised and decency outraged. This is the climax of the tale, a defence of what Jesus did as representing God in His dealings with sinful people. It is argued that love can say and do daring things to one who is truly penitent, and that the self-complacent, self-righteous temper which takes offence at such an attitude is out of touch with love divine. Those who imagine that God is somehow prejudicing their interests or the cause of religion by rejoicing over poor penitents, adjudge themselves outsiders, and Jesus declines to accept their point of view as in any way decisive for the action and attitude of love towards sin; they are thinking more of themselves than of others, and that is wholly contrary to the temper of the Household.

As has been already hinted, Jesus implies that God loves man by His demand for human likeness to God. It may be further argued that in reiterating the command, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, he assumed the same truth; for, if God's supreme desire and claim is to be loved, it follows that He must be lovable and loving, the command reflecting His own nature. This opens up into the second phase, however, viz. man's love to God.

II

THE love of man for God was enshrined in the OT injunction which Jesus repeated and re-issued, during the course of an interview with a scribe or Pharisaic jurist. Two variant traditions of the episode survive. In one (Matthew xxii. 34 f.=Mark xii. 28 f.), Jesus tells him: *You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and chief command.* In the Lucan tradition (x. 25 f.), this answer is given by the jurist, and Jesus ratifies it warmly. The variation is of no great importance for our present purpose, and the sequel to the saying will come up in another connexion. For the present, it is enough to notice how Jesus is not announcing any discovery about God, but lifting into new prominence a religious truth in which he had been himself trained. That is, if we may assume that the Shema, the form of devotion for male adults in Judaism, was already in use during the first century, with its introductory sentences: ‘With abounding love hast Thou loved us, O Lord our God. . . . Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast chosen Thy people Israel in love.’ The opening confession, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is one. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might*, etc., was taught to a Jewish boy by his father; it meant that devotion to God involved the dedication of all one’s powers to Him. According to one fine interpretation (T. Jer. *Berachoth* ix. 15), *with all thy soul* meant ‘even if life be taken away,’ and *with all thy might* denoted ‘with all thy possessions.’ At anyrate these great words of the Deuteronomic code (vi. 4) involved the thought of love to God as absolute devotion, a disposition of entire service resting on belief in Him. This is pronounced the paramount factor in the religious life. To recite the Shema was to take upon oneself 'the yoke of the kingdom,' and for his new conception of the divine kingdom Jesus required no better basis, even as he revealed the loving and lovable God afresh. Where he went beyond his contemporaries was in this: he saw and said that such an emphasis, when conjoined with love to one's neighbour, superseded the special traditional requirements which had accumulated round it as the normal expression for devoted obedience.

I

Twice and only twice does Jesus refer to love for God. Once (*a*) in a denunciation of the Pharisees, preserved in Luke xi. 42, the only passage where ἀγάπη occurs in this gospel. In Matthew (xxiii. 23) the Pharisees are charged with having *omitted the weightier matters of the Torah, justice and mercy and faithfulness*. Luke alters *mercy* (ἔλεος), or conduct towards one's neighbour, into *love for God*, and leaves out *faithfulness* (πίστιν); he preserves thereby a closer approximation to what was probably the original stress of Jesus on love to God and to one's neighbour (as in x. 27), since *justice* is an equivalent for the latter, as in the OT passage (Isaiah i. 16–18) which is an anticipation of the general theme of Jesus here, or in Psalm xxxiii. 5 where the Lord is said to have ἐλεημοσύνην καὶ κρίσιν in His people, i.e. the kindly heart which not only is charitable but helps the poor man to his rights.

In Matthew's version of the saying, πίστις is faithfulness in the sense of good faith or fidelity—a usage known to classical Greek as early as Aristotle. The substitution of *love to God* for *mercy* was not difficult, for ἔλεος here denotes love for one's fellow-member in the Community, and whatever the words of Hosea vi. 6 meant originally, even though they may have carried love for God (see above, p. 15) also, they mean for Jesus brotherly love when he cites them (see below): *what I care for is mercy* (ἔλεος), *not sacrifice.*

The associations of a term like ἔλεος are indicated by the great revelation of God's character in Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7: *the Lord, a God pitiful and kind, slow to be angry, rich in love and loyalty* (for this is what *goodness and truth* mean), *proving kind to thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but one who will never acquit the guilty*, etc. When this passed into Greek, (*a*) *proving kind* or *keeping mercy for* became δικαιοσύνην διατηρῶν καὶ ἔλεος, (*b*) while *rich* or *abundant* in love ('hesed') became πολυέλεος. (*c*) The former rendering is noticeable, because now and then the LXX actually translates 'hesed' by δικαιοσύνη, as e.g. in Isaiah lxiii. 7, where *according to the multitude of his lovingkindness* becomes in Greek κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ. There δικαιοσύνη, though generally an equivalent for 'righteousness' or 'justice,' could upon occasion represent 'loving favour' (hesed), simply because the divine character denoted by 'just' or 'righteous' might be conceived as moral goodness with the glow of active affection for the People. This has no precise parallel in the NT, but (*b*) the use of ἔλεος as an equivalent for 'hesed' is implied in the Hosea-quotation (*love I desire, not sacrifice*). Whatever Semitic term Jesus had on his lips, either the Hebrew or an Aramaic equivalent, he meant what we mean by *love.* The LXX rendering ἔλεος might cover this, but not the narrower English equivalent of *mercy*, for what Hosea meant and what Jesus meant by this emphasis on 'hesed' was larger than any attitude towards sin and suffering.

How close the Greek terms ἔλεος and ἀγάπη were, may be seen from the rendering of a passage like Hosea ii. 23: *I will have mercy on her who received no mercy.* In B this is rendered ἀγαπήσω τὴν οὐκ ἠγαπημένην, but in AQ ἐλεήσω τὴν οὐκ ἠλεημένην. The latter is followed by Peter (1 Peter ii. 10), the former by Paul (Romans ix. 25), as they echo the promise.

It is a fragment of table-talk at some noon-day meal to which he had been invited by a Pharisee. His friendly host was surprised and shocked that he had not observed the punctilious rule of washing the hands before a meal, to purify them from any possible contamination incurred by contact with some dog of a Gentile or something ceremonially unclean. Jesus, who ignored this petty code, took the opportunity of saying a word on real purity as an inward possession. *But*, he adds—as if conscious that his words would gain little attention —*but woe to you Pharisees! you tithe mint and rue and every vegetable*, in your highflying ardour, *but justice and love for God you disregard; these latter you ought to have practised—without omitting the former.*[1] What Jesus marked and condemned was not so much a punctilious attention to ritual details as an unscrupulous neglect of what were the really essential features of religion. The OT tithed only corn, oil, new wine, and fruit (Leviticus xxvii. 30, Numbers xviii. 12, Deuteronomy xii. 6, xiv. 22 f.), but the strict zeal of the Pharisees had included all garden produce. Well and good, Jesus means—but it is fatal when this pre-occupation causes you to lose sight of the central demands of God. Love to God and upright conduct towards men are the supreme ends, it is held, and, while a true devotion of the heart to God is not incompatible with strictness in religious observances, while indeed any genuine religion will develop a code of its own for regulating common life, at the same time the latter is apt to overshadow the former and, unless one is careful, to throw it out of focus by an undue attention to the minutiae of the code. Tithing oneself was a form of showing one's devotion to God. But in emphasizing the form, one may easily miss the spirit and aim of the religion, slipping into self-seeking and malice. *You do clean the outside of the cup and the plate*, attending punctiliously to the external minutiae of religion, *but your*

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[1] In Luke this (ταῦτα ἔδει ποιῆσαι κἀκεῖνα μὴ παρεῖναι) is not quite certain; the textual evidence suggests that it is an addition. But it was in the original, as reproduced by Matthew (xxiii. 23).

inner life is filled with rapacity and malice, i.e. with greed and censoriousness, greed of gain instead of love to God, censoriousness instead of just dealing with your fellows. Deliberately Luke follows this up by (ver. 43) *Woe to you Pharisees! you love* (ἀγαπᾶτε) *the front bench in the synagogues and salutations in the marketplaces*—where ἀγαπᾶν is used in the sense of 'to value,' 'to delight in,' 'to like,' or 'to be fond of,' a classical sense in which it is synonymous with φιλεῖν (see above, p. 45). Obviously, the *love for God* which was ignored in the Pharisaic praxis is indirectly contrasted with their fondness for deferential recognition and respect.

2

The second allusion (*b*) is in a passage which shows that love to God means serving Him (Matthew vi. 24).

No one can serve two masters:
  either he will hate one and love the other,
    or else he will stand by the one and despise the other—
  you cannot serve both God and Mammon.

It is the only passage in the synoptic gospels where *serve* (δουλεύειν) is applied to the relation between God and man. Luke (xvi. 13) reads indeed *no servant* (οἰκέτης) for *no one*, to make the thought more definite. But the thought is quite in harmony with the stress on God as Father in the context, for in Oriental life the relation of son to father implied service; the son was naturally employed in the business and household of his father. *A son should honour his father, and a servant should reverence his lord. . . . I will spare them, as a man spares the son who works in his service* (Malachi i. 6, iii. 17).

This love to God, which inspires a man to *stand by* Him, upholding His honour and interests, rests on moral choice. There are two alternatives before man, God and His rival, and it is for man by a decision of his will to choose whom he will serve. It was the power of bringing men thus face to face with a crucial decision, and of inducing them to give up the weakness and folly of halting between two opinions, that probably reminded people of the prophet Elijah when they met and heard Jesus. The devotion to God which he claimed from them was to be whole-hearted, spontaneous, and uncompromising. Later Christian thought elaborated this truth into the view that love of some kind was at the root of deadly sins no less than of the highest virtue, as when Dante in the *Purgatorio* (xvii. 91 f.) seeks to show that love may go wrong in three ways, (*a*) by devoting itself to wrong objects, (*b*) by showing too little devotion for the right object, or (*c*) by excess, as in the cases of gluttony and lust—a theory which goes back ultimately to Thomas Aquinas, who also distinguishes *dilectio naturalis*, that appetite for the good which is in every creature, inclining them to what is true like plants to the light, and *dilectio electiva* or the love which chooses deliberately to serve God or money. Such distinctions did not lie within the immediate horizon of Jesus, though he does imply that this devotion to God is an act of choice. The corollary to his word here is really that God is no easy-going Father, but one who has to be served strictly and reverently in a life of moral responsibility. This is a thought which recurs in the parables of service ; it is at the heart of the petition, *Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come*, for ‘ to hallow God's name ’ is to live for His honour and make His glory the rule of life. God the Father has His realm or kingdom, Jesus teaches, and love to Him involves a diligent, whole-hearted co-operation with His active interests and utter obedience to His orders.

Here, as elsewhere, the truth that love to God means service rendered to God is an implicit correction of the idea that religious love is merely or mainly an emotional experience. But the primary point of the counsel is that such service or devotion must be single-minded ; *you cannot serve God and Mammon*, Mammon being the popular equivalent for worldliness, or the World personified as selfish gain. The underlying argument of Matthew vi. 19–24 is that the religious life must be inward in principle and also a unity—one thing or another, no weak compromise. The object of our confidence ultimately determines our character, and Jesus presses for a whole-hearted devotion to God the Father and for confidence in Him as the one regulative power of life, as opposed to any attempt to combine this with a devotion to Mammon which is bound to overshadow and supplant its rival. The service of Mammon, to which God's service is here opposed, is the worrying, anxious pre-occupation with matters like gain and profit. *Therefore*, Jesus sums up, after claiming a whole-hearted devotion to God, *therefore I tell you*—do not worry yourselves by devoting yourselves anxiously to this service of the world. The reward of loving God is that life is free from all such cares.

3

The sphere in which this love for God is to be shown has been already mentioned; it forms the subject of the next section. But before passing on to brotherly love, between man and man, we shall notice two allusions to love for Jesus.

(i) One is the saying about the heroic demand made upon his followers (Matthew x. 37, 38):

He who loves father or mother more than me
is not worthy of me;
he who loves son or daughter more than me
is not worthy of me;
he who will not take up his cross and follow after me
is not worthy of me.

These are orders for active service, given to a body of men who were being sent out on a special mission [1] which required everything to be set aside that might conflict with loyalty and devotion to the cause. What is uppermost is the thought of the person of Jesus as representing his cause. Love as loyalty is his supreme demand upon this group of men; they are summoned to prove their devotion to the cause of God which he represents. No doubt, the saying holds true in a wider and less heroic sphere. "The devil comes to a man in the shape of his wife and family" is a truth which requires no comment. But the original point of the saying is to be found in a situation in which all family ties, however legitimate and appealing, must stand aside in order to allow the higher loyalty to operate.[1] Jesus claims a devotion directed to the end with which he identified himself, and for which he is to be 'loved,' seriously and manfully; nothing, however dear and near, must be permitted to interfere with this supreme devotion. Hard though it may be to sacrifice one's natural affections and break with tender ties, this is required in special circumstances. The claim is not a fanatical outburst; it does not imply that Jesus thought little of such affection. It is the word for a crisis which demands a special vocation. When he gives the lead, his followers must be prepared to face suffering and shame and loss.

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[1] Luke, in generalizing the audience as *large crowds*, blunts the point of the original appeal, which was addressed to picked men who are warned that they are not to be mere sanguine optimists.

A change and an addition are to be noted in the Lucan version (xiv. 26): *if anyone comes to me and does not hate* (οὐ μισεῖ) *his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, aye and his own life, he cannot be a disciple of mine.*

(*a*) The alteration of φιλῶν into οὐ μισεῖ brings the latter close to the comparative sense of μισεῖν which recurs in John xii. 25: *he who loves* (φιλεῖν) *his life loses it, and he who*

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[1] Garibaldi's appeal, on leaving Rome in 1849, is an illustration of the same spirit: "Let him who loves his country follow me. I offer neither pay nor quarters nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, and death."

cares not for (μισεῖν) *his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.* This answers to the 'ordo amoris' which Origen and Augustine put forward, the former in his Commentary on the Song of Solomon, the latter in the *De Civitate Dei*; the true love puts God first, and all else, however legitimate in its own place, second. The application is generalized, but the principle is the same as that laid down by Jesus in this precept.

(*b*) The addition of *aye and his own life also* marks the tension and passion of the demand, as in the outburst of young Clifford in *The Second Part of Henry the Sixth* (v. 2. 36–38):

> Let no soldier fly:
> He that is truly dedicate to war
> Hath no self-love.

As we shall see in a moment, there is a true self-love recognized by Jesus in the care for oneself which incites and enables a man to realize personally the will of God. For—

> How can he expect that others will
> Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
> Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

It is only by becoming responsible for one's own life, through self-denial and unselfish service of others, that one counts as a moral being, or can count on any notice from God or men. But this is not the self-love which Jesus means here, when he claims that merely personal interests must be sunk in devotion to his cause.

4

(ii) The other allusion occurs in the interview between Jesus and the sinful woman (Luke vii. 36–50); this time it is not love shown in active service, but the love of a penitent soul. This again is one of the scenes at a meal, for which

Luke has a predilection. The host, a hospitable Pharisee called Simon, was embarrassed as he invited Jesus to the meal; conscious of a certain condescension to one who was too important to be overlooked and who yet was not a social equal, he omitted the usual courtesies of the occasion. An uninvited guest also slipped in, a notorious wanton who had evidently been touched by the Lord's words on repentance; she lavished ardent honour on him, pressing kisses on his feet with an Oriental expression of homage (not of mere affection). Simon showed that he was shocked by the sight of Jesus allowing such a loose character to approach him and to be so shamelessly effusive. But Jesus as *the friend of tax-gatherers and sinners*[1] repels this Pharisaic misunderstanding, and tells the story of the Moneylender and the Two Debtors. *There was a moneylender who had two debtors; one owed him fifty pounds, the other five. As they were unable to pay, he freely forgave them both. Tell me, now, which of them will love him most?* That is, which will be likely to feel most grateful to him, most devoted to him for his unexpected generosity? Then, pointing to the woman, Jesus argues that her ample, spontaneous homage proved she had been already deeply in debt and forgiven. No wonder she was moved, moved even to this passionate outburst of affection! Simon might be shocked by it, but Jesus understood it. He did not cynically regard her demonstrative signs of gratitude as one flicker of a naturally emotional character which would die out as it had flashed up. He believed her penitence would be lasting, since the experience of divine mercy can create a character that endures. Hence he reassures her by ratifying publicly her pardon: *I tell you, many as her sins are, they are forgiven, for her love is great.* "Her sins were many," Father Tyrrell observes, "just because she loved much—too much.

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[1] The story is an illustration of this (ver. 34). See R. P. Buzy in the *Revue biblique*, (1917) pp. 184 f., (1919) pp. 281 f., (1920) pp. 436 f.

It is usually the same gift which damns or saves us, according as it is ill or well used."[1] This woman's gift was a power of passionate love, and Jesus redeems it and her together. In the name and power of God he had already moved her to some private resolve of breaking with her evil past; his gracious love had roused her faith and penitence, till she dared to believe that, in spite of the grim hold sin had taken of her, she was again free to be a daughter of God. By her humble, adoring homage she showed as best as she could her deep sense of having been freely and unexpectedly forgiven.

If God be just, morally strict, how can He be loving to sinful men? In an experience of personal guilt, it was hard to believe that He could, or to see how He could; but Jesus had made the impression on this woman that such pardon was possible and present where He was. On the other hand, pious persons, who had no profound sense of sin, or who managed to believe that God's pardon extended to them within obedience to the Law, asked the same question as they looked at offenders like this woman; they honestly considered that it was dangerous to religion to extend such free forgiveness without securing sufficient guarantees of good conduct or without imposing conventional penance first of all. This was the attitude of the Pharisees as represented by Simon. The third question raised by God's justice, namely, how was it compatible with the sufferings of good people?, is not directly raised in the teaching of Jesus with regard to love; this feature emerges later in the epistles.

5

The last words of Jesus to the penitent woman are most significant: *your faith has saved you; go in peace. Your faith* (ἡ πίστις σου), not *your love*! For the normal attitude of man to God is faith rather than love, in the teaching of Jesus as recorded by the synoptic gospels, where, as we have seen, the allusions to man's love for God are almost as scanty as those to God's love for man. The reason for this is not that Jesus could assume love for God as an inherited religious principle in the experience of his disciples, but that he preferred 'faith' as a deeper expression of man's relationship to God. Trust in the divine love and power was evidently a more adequate term than love, in his mind. And reflection justifies this. For we cannot speak of loving God in precisely the same sense as we speak of loving one another; the former 'love' includes nothing of the chivalrous and protecting attitude, nothing of the pardoning element, which enters into mutual love between human beings. Love to others includes the motive of enriching and developing their lives, also, and this is absent from the thought of love to God. Besides, 'love' does not necessarily emphasize the humble trust which, for Jesus, was so vital in man's relationship to God.

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[1] *Nova et Vetera*, p. 95.

The paucity of such allusions to love for God or for Jesus is full of meaning. In the Marcan tradition the only reference occurs in the declaration upon the supreme commandment. In the common source (Q) of Matthew and Luke there are only three;[1] in two of them love denotes attachment or loyalty, and in one the Lucan version avoids the term 'love,' whilst in another it preserves 'love' as against Matthew. In the special Lucan tradition there is the only reference to love for Jesus from a penitent. In view of the fact that the gospel traditions were compiled during a period when love for God or Christ was becoming fairly common in the vocabulary of the Church, this comparative rarity of allusions in the synoptic record is another piece of indirect evidence that the religious ideas and expressions of the apostolic age were not read back wholesale into the records of what Jesus taught, and also on the whole a point in favour of their authenticity. But a more important inference from these allusions is that the reserve in the use of love-language here indicates a religious judgment. It is true that Jesus is not represented as speaking of 'faith towards God and love towards man,' for in the simple direct language of the OT, in which he had been trained, he can speak of love to God and to one's neighbour as the essence of the divine law for life. Nevertheless his characteristic language is that of confidence or faith in the Father's loving care. We might say that the OT *φόβος* in this connexion becomes *πίστις* in the NT. For Jesus faith means humble insight into the reality of God, which reality is 'love'—in the sense of a gracious, wise purpose, neither sentimental nor indulgent but morally strong, with a kind, stern control, which meets men in the discipline and duties of life. Reverent trust in the goodwill of God as the royal Father becomes, therefore, the natural expression for man's attitude to Him. Luther's moving words bring out this truth: "A true love to God says from the heart, 'Lord God, I am Thy creature; do with me what Thou wilt, it is all the same to me; I am indeed Thine, and I know that.'" Love to God, as Jesus teaches, is best shown by trust in His goodwill, a trust that often requires moral courage. *Fear not—O men, how little you trust Him* (ὀλιγόπιστοι)—these are characteristic appeals and reproaches of Jesus. For by love to God he understands sheer devotion, humble confidence, and a contentment with Him which rests in Him unflinchingly as our End and All. It is obvious that this does not enter fully into 'love' as that is understood between man and man; 'faith' is a more suitable term here, for "faith affirms that the actual order of the world, upon which all our blessedness actually depends, is of the nature of that wise and holy goodness we name love."[1] Along with this confidence there goes reverence for God, which sets His will before all else, rejoicing in Him as He meets us with His care and claims.

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[1] Oman, *Grace and Personality*, pp. 117 f.

The sphere in which these demands are made on His people is human intercourse pre-eminently, with its call for service and helpfulness. Whilst Nature is one revelation, the fatherly goodness of God is not confined to blessings like rain and sunshine; it is in human nature rather than in Nature that God meets us not only with His gifts of personal love and pardon, but with His claims upon the corresponding qualities of man's generosity and self-sacrifice; as His personal nature and demands are revealed in our human relationships, it follows that our love to Him is most adequately exercised and expressed in the fulfilment of our duties to one another.

III

THE material for the teaching of Jesus upon mutual love is richer. There is the command to love one's neighbour *as one's self*, which implies love for the self, and which opens up into the Golden Rule, though this is not stated in love-language. There is the new interpretation of *neighbour*, and the extension of this love to one's *enemies*, which superseded the 'lex talionis.' Finally, there is the organic connexion between all this love and love to God or God's love, which maintains the religious basis of the ethical teaching. Christian love, as we might say, loves each man in God and God in every man.

I

Jesus carries on the truth that the value and joy of personal life is first learned in oneself. *Love your neighbour as yourself.* Love of self has a moral significance[1]; it initiates man into the meaning of help, service, and sympathy, as nothing else can do, for love of self, in this high sense, means the realization of one's value to God. Personal life is a trust and gift from God, which has to be maintained; it is only as we feel the responsibility for this in our own lives that we can hope to understand it and learn to forward it in the lives of others. The definition of Christian love as "devotion to the ends of God in human personality" involves an appreciation of what our own personality means as the sphere in which we first encounter the ends of God the Father. He who loves himself, as Jesus intended, is not fond of himself but desires to protect and develop the capacities of his personal life as an endowment from God.

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[1] So Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, ix. 4.

In modern ethics we are familiar with Kant's application of this as a maxim : " Always treat humanity, both in your own person and in the person of others, as an end and never merely as a means." His three 'vices against oneself' are lying, avarice, and false humility.[1] In the teaching of Jesus love to oneself implies that one must never neglect one's capacities, nor fail to live up to the full measure of one's powers. As we belong to God, possessing our life from Him, we dare not undervalue our personalities. Naturally, God, one's neighbour, and one's self are bound up together ; they cannot be separated without casuistry and pedantry. Nevertheless, the true love of self is a duty. As Hillel put it, *If I am not for myself, who is for me ?* (meaning that one cannot expect others to respect one's personality if one does not do that for oneself to begin with). *And if I am for myself alone*, caring for no one else, *what am I ?* (*Pirke Aboth* i. 14). Jesus preferred to put this truth otherwise ; he spoke of the danger of losing one's life or self by such an error as the undue love of possessions. *A man's 'life' does not consist in the abundance of what he possesses : whoever wants to save his life* (by evading self-sacrifice for my sake) *will lose it.* When the self or life is valued for lower ends than those of God, when it is made the means of enjoying mere comfort or happiness, it is lost. Vices like cowardice or avarice destroy the soul with which we are entrusted by God for His greater ends ; any such form of selfishness excludes life from the final bliss of God. Besides, this prevents life here and now from entering into the unselfish service of God which alone qualifies for that bliss. Self-denial and self-sacrifice are regarded by Jesus as the true means of efficiency in such a direction, setting life free from the distractions which would hinder loyalty to the cause and mission of the Lord. They also disclose the meaning of duty for oneself and others in a way which is impossible to self-interest. It is those who rise above private interests who alone can see what life may mean.

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[1] In *Logos* (1927), pp. 287–310, Dr. A. Faust compares the Christian idea of neighbourly love with the conception of 'neighbour' as a social category in Kant and Fichte.

Such self-denial is an expression of love for one's self which has learned not to be weak or indulgent through any indifference to the divine ends of life. It is only such a care or love for oneself, instinct with moral seriousness, which enables one to be strict and severe, on occasion, with others for their good. Jesus teaches that he only has a right to rebuke others, who is not only ready to forgive them but first ready to rebuke himself. The duty of being stern with others, even as we view them in a forgiving spirit, presupposes that we have already understood how to be exigent with ourselves in personal life. And a further inference is to be drawn. For, since the experience of God's love reveals the supreme value which He attaches to character, it follows that this care or love for our personal character must involve a serious sense of its sanctity, which forbids anything like the loss of self-respect or tampering with degrading passions. This consideration affects even our love of others. Thus, there are distinct limitations to the sacrifices which one has the right to make on their behalf. It would be a breach of true love for oneself, that is, of a just care for God's interests, were we to make any sacrifice which compromised our own personality. As God's love toward us is a holy love, our love cannot sacrifice truth or purity for the sake even of those in whom we have a dear interest. Love is safeguarded by its own honour. The sister in *Measure for Measure* rightly feels that she dare not sacrifice her honour for the sake of saving her brother's life ; it is a hard but a true conviction at which she arrives, that no one has the right to demand or to expect such a sacrifice, since love cannot be expected to do anything for others which would impair or forfeit its own worth. Similarly, the happiness of others ought not to be put above their moral welfare, and it is only those who have a just sense of the serious ends of love in their own lives who can act towards others in the spirit of the Golden Rule. The fond father in *Le Père Goriot* lavishes money on his daughters in a foolish affection, which loses sight of their moral well-being and consequently impoverishes their lives instead of furthering their characters.

The command *You must love your neighbour as yourself*, which has been added by Matthew (xix. 19) to the five commands of the Decalogue cited by Jesus as a test for the religious attainments of the so-called ‘ rich young ruler,’ is a catechetical insertion of the evangelist, intended to pave the way for the subsequent demand for the renunciation of property ; i.e. it is a secondary item in the tradition, which probably represents a positive equivalent for the original *Do not defraud* of the Marcan version (x. 19). The spirit of the Matthaean version is echoed in a parallel from one of the early uncanonical gospels, which had some connexion with Matthew ; for into the Latin version of the pseudo-Origenic Commentary on Matthew there has drifted a passage from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which preserves the following account of an interview between Jesus and one of two rich men. “ The other rich man said to him, ‘ Master, what good thing am I to do that I may live ? ’ He said, ‘ O man, obey the Law and the prophets.’ ‘ I have obeyed them,’ he replied. Jesus said to him, ‘ Go and sell all you possess, divide it among the poor, and come, follow me.’ But the rich man began to scratch his head ; he was not pleased. So the Lord said to him, ‘ How can you say, I have obeyed the Law and the prophets ? For in the Law it is written, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, and lo, many of your brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad in filth, dying for hunger, while your house is full of many good things, and not a thing goes out of it to them.’ ”

Another saying of Jesus, assigned to the same uncanonical gospel, is cited by Jerome in his Commentary upon Ephesians (v. 4): “ Never be joyful save when you look upon your brother with love.”

2

This is what underlies the maxim *Whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them ; that is the meaning of the Law and the prophets* (Matthew vii. 12, Luke vi. 31). Love is the supreme test. No one would care to be treated simply on the cold basis of ' That is all you deserve ' ; if you expect generosity and kindness as well as strict justice from others, you must not insist primarily on your own rights and handle others according to the code of bare justice. Furthermore, if you expect to be forgiven by others, when you are sorry and repent, you must not put the law of retaliation into force against them, but handle them patiently and mercifully. The implication is that what we desire for ourselves is morally good ; in preserving our ' self ' or life we are conserving what is also of supreme value in the life of anyone else, and the two relationships run into one another. As the ends of God in others are often served by our frank criticism of faults as well as by kindly forbearance, for example, the man who really loves himself does not desire to escape such rebuke or to have life made soft for him at the expense of moral interests. A faithful friend is one who will not shrink from severity upon occasion any more than from loyal belief in another or from the forgiving spirit, and he who expects this will practise it, if he is true to his conception of what 'love' involves.

How arduous this positive form of the Golden Rule appeared to the Christian conscience may be seen from the tendency to fall back upon the negative form which had been current in the finer circles of Jewish piety. Hillel, for example, when asked sarcastically by a pagan inquirer to tell him the whole of the Torah as quickly as possible, replied, " What is hateful to thee to suffer at the hands of another, do not thou to thy fellow-man " (T.B. *Sabbath* 31*a*) ; this, he added, was the entire Torah, all else being merely the explanation or expansion of it.

Similar expressions of what was essential in the moral code are to be found in Philo, in Greek, Chinese, and Buddhistic ethics. In the apostolic Fathers, in the Didachê (i. 2) for example and elsewhere, we meet a similar negative form: *Whatsoever you would not have done to yourself, do not to another.* It made its way into the Western text of Acts xv. 29 as early as the second century, and later writers cite it freely. The fact is, justice is always easier for the average individual than generosity; to refrain from injury sounds more simple and feasible than to act kindly; 'hurt nobody' is more intelligible than 'help everybody.' But when we take the Golden Rule not as a complete summary of what Jesus taught on mutual duties but in connexion with the rest of his teaching on the reign and love of God, it turns out to be not so open as it seems to certain criticisms which have been passed on it. (*a*) The positive form has been held to be impracticable, because some relationships in life do not permit us to do to others what we would like them to do to us—e.g. the relationships of parent and child, or of ruler and subject. But Jesus says οὔτω, not ταῦτα. It is the same spirit that is meant. And even when ταῦτα is used, as it is by Paul in telling masters to act by their servants in the same way as he had bidden servants treat their masters (Ephesians vi. 9), no real difficulty is raised. It would be pedantic to read the Golden Rule as if it were a detailed code which is the same for all and sundry. (*b*) Neither does it follow that the positive form sets self-interest first, whereas the negative form gives priority to the interests of other people. No amount of enlightened self-interest would ever lead Christians to love their enemies and to do to others what they desired others to do to them. There is no need to disparage the ethical value[1] of the negative form; it had and it has its place in disciplining human intercourse, as St. Paul himself implies (Romans xiii. 10). But neither is there any use in ignoring the fact that the positive form tallies with the full current of the teaching of Jesus upon the love that is not content to avoid hurt to others but seeks their good thoughtfully and actively. "The Gospel form is a splendid working principle, which has wrought incalculable good to humanity" (Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism*, i. 22).

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[1] A timely statement on this is given by G. B. King in *The Journal of Religion* (1928), pp. 268–279.

3

Just as the maxim *Love the Lord your God* meant, for Israel or for the individual Israelite, devotion to God's cause and commands, so the maxim *Love your neighbour* involved loyalty in the shape of service and helpfulness within the community ruled by God. Noble words upon this latter duty lay in the OT. They were not always couched in love-language ; justice and fidelity are frequently urged, as well as mercifulness and charity. Indeed, it is remarkable that the prophets rarely use the Deuteronomic phrase about loving one another. Generally other equivalents are employed, and in this respect the synoptic records prove that Jesus exercised the same freedom, not binding himself to the phrase about loving one another. Where he expanded the OT maxim was in the conception of 'neighbour.' In the OT this term was already stretched to cover the resident alien as well as the true Israelite—as in the noble precept of Leviticus xix. 34 (*the alien who settles beside you shall be treated like a native, and you must love him as you love yourself*), which practically would cover most of those with whom the Israelite found himself in contact. Yet there is no clear evidence that before Jesus anyone took 'neighbour' to mean fellow-man ; the first traces of this in rabbinism are not to be found until the second century. It was he who taught and practised love so deeply that it broke with particularism and emerged into love for man as man, a neighbour being anyone who needs our help, irrespective of creed or nationality. "In the days of Jesus the synagogue interpreted 'neighbour' as strictly as did the Old Testament; only the Israelite was a neighbour.' "[1]

Such Christian love is more than goodwill or a readiness to be on good terms with people, for the true disciple, Jesus teaches, must take the initiative, and show an active interest in his fellows, by availing himself of every opportunity to do them good. In the special case of a brother or fellow-disciple who has offended, the teaching (Luke xvii. 3 f.) is that the man is not to be left severely alone, but to be rebuked or checked. Instead of remaining merely passive, one must expostulate and remonstrate with the offender.[2] *If your brother sins, check him, and if he repents forgive him.* Jesus is explicit on the duty of bringing home to the man's conscience what he has done—a trying duty, from which average human nature shrinks, but which nevertheless is vital to genuine love. The particular counsel is not expressed in the language of 'love,' but it is one application of the love-principle in its positive action. Whilst ordinary people would be inclined to wash their hands of any responsibility, being too proud to let it be seen how much they have suffered, and afraid lest in an interview they might lose their temper or be thought officious, Jesus claims that his followers must not be content to wait until some apology has been offered, but must take steps to deal privately with the offender. It is a debt of love to him, to make him realize the seriousness of his offence; such faithful dealing is one way of doing good to him, for his own sake. The true disciple, in a word, must take action, endeavouring to show the offender how his sin is condemned and disapproved by those nearest to him, the object being to make him truly ashamed and penitent. The entire teaching of Jesus on forgiveness rests on this conception of love, since, if the disciple thinks mainly of his own interests in the case of an offence or injury, self-love becomes a medium which distorts the original offence and checks the impulse to consider unselfishly the harm done by the wrongdoer to himself.

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[1] Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, i. 353 f. H. M. Mueller's essay on "Das Christliche Liebesgebot und die Lex Naturae" (*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1928, 161–182) has some valuable criticisms of the problem as stated by Luther and Troeltsch.

[2] "He was the most impartial, or perhaps unpartial, of my friends," says Byron of Hobhouse. "He always told me my faults, but I must do him the justice to add, that he told them to me, and not to others."

A beautiful parallel in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* definitely links this duty of dealing with an offender, to brotherly love. The Greek text is difficult (*Gad* vi. 3 f.), but the main sense of the passage is clear: *Love one another from the heart* (ἀπὸ καρδίας, see on 1 Peter i. 22), *and, if anyone sins against you, talk to him peaceably* (i.e. rebuke him without losing your temper) . . . *and if he confesses and repents, forgive him. But if he denies it, do not quarrel with him*, etc. Such words show how some of the finer spirits in one quarter of Judaism were, in their own way, approaching the delicate and difficult problem of forgiveness along this line. Two difficult channels of charitable love are the bestowing of gifts and the dealing with an offender. The former easily becomes patronizing. The latter requires much self-command and tact. *If your brother sins against you, go and reprove him, as between you and him alone* (Matthew xviii. 15), is the first advice of Jesus; this private dealing is a searching ordeal for some people, but it must precede any public talk or condemnation on the part of the injured person. Paul caught the spirit of the counsel when he bade the Galatians *set the offender right in a spirit of gentleness* (Galatians vi. 1), handling him without overbearing pride. This, of course, refers to Church action, not to a wrong done by some individual to another; but in Matthew (ver. 17) the offender, if recalcitrant, is to be reported to the Church.

Jesus also teaches that the sense of our personal indebtedness to God for pardon prompts or ought to prompt our forgiveness of other people. He says, "Do as you would be done by," but he also says, "Do to others as you have had God do to you already." Personal devotion to the forgiving God and the experience of God's forgiveness is the supreme motive for brotherly love to an offender. The unmerciful servant in the parable is punished because he did not treat others as the Lord had treated him. Here the correspondence between the divine love and human love becomes specially close. Instead of leaving the initiative to be taken by the sinner, love makes the first move; instead of being merely ready to pardon when forgiveness is asked, love endeavours to bring the offender to his senses; and instead of avoiding retaliation, love seeks positively to do good to the wrongdoers. This dynamic principle lies at the heart of the love of God for sinful men, and as such it inspires the behaviour of those who in His fellowship are in contact with personal injuries and private offences done by their neighbours. God's way of love must be followed thus by His people.

The recognition of a moral purpose in genuine love and friendship is as old as Aristotle, whose pages on friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (viii.–ix.) glow with an unwonted fervour. To Aristotle, as critics have pointed out, friendship becomes the glorified form of human intercourse. He exalts the bliss and profit of friendship, but he is careful to allow that the mutual love of friends implies purpose, i.e. a will of good (viii. 5), and that "it is characteristic of good men neither to go wrong (ἁμαρτάνειν) themselves nor to allow their friends to go wrong" (viii. 8); also, that good friends "seem to grow better as they exercise their powers and correct one another" (ix. 12).

This service of love excludes not simply the unforgiving spirit but the selfish, proud temper which desires to advance itself at the expense of others, or to gain notice and praise (Mark ix. 35). It produces humility in two ways, humility towards God, since we are all His servants, here for His ends and for His alone, and humility towards our fellow-men, that is, a steady refusal to exempt ourselves from what may be irksome and costly in the way of duty to others. Furthermore, as Jesus teaches, it is more than charity, in our narrower sense of the term. He does not make one class the receivers and the other the recipients of love, but lays the command upon all classes, on rich and poor alike. Almsgiving and charity are no doubt one of the most obvious forms of neighbourly love, but it extends to the needy and the sick, in the shape of personal service, and also to the whole range of intercourse, where people live together and require to be treated with kindness and good-feeling if life is to be lived aright. An easy-going love, which might overcome the preliminary temptation to be stingy in gifts, might nevertheless fail, if it contented itself with giving gifts instead of personal service, or if it gave gifts in a patronizing fashion, or if it bestowed such gifts as weakened the self-reliance of the recipient. In these and other ways actual charity would come short of the personal, thoughtful service which Christian love requires. And, in any case, the human soul requires more than gifts of food and clothing or money; the need of a deeper satisfaction, such as only friendship and religious interest can meet, calls for Christian love in a larger expression than beneficence. *The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached;* the last words are not an anticlimax.

To 'love' thus is to forward the highest interests of others, to be alive to the possibilities of their lives under the discipline of God, and to do what one can to render them sensible of His purpose for them as moral personalities. Such, Jesus teaches, is the really divine spirit in life. He forbids retaliation; he warns his followers against scorn and spitefulness, against ill-treatment or harsh criticism of those who offend them. Why? Not because this is not worth while, in view of the approaching end, but because it is unworthy of them as God's children. The qualities of charitable feeling and generous action upon this heroic level, demanded from his followers by Jesus, correspond to the perfect life of their God; this new and higher goodness is the disposition which is to prevail in the Realm or final fellowship of God the Father. When men asked about the motives that were to prevail there, or about the relationship in which they were to stand towards God and one another, Jesus summed up his answer in the word 'love,' since the moral law of love, as he described it, was to be the law of the Realm or order set up by God, whose nature was loving. The counsels of brotherly love, therefore, are not intended simply for the interval between the present and the imminent end, when the Realm is to be inaugurated; nor are they designed to represent love as the means to an end other than itself.

The aim of the precepts on love was not to draw up any plan for a fresh social order, however, but to inspire and direct the group of his followers who were to be the nucleus of the new Realm of God. This has to be borne in mind, if we are to understand the precepts in their historical perspective. Thus, when he bids his followers pray for their persecutors, he is really thinking not of the effect to be produced upon the insulting outsiders, but of the effect produced by this spirit upon the disciples themselves: *Love your enemies and pray for them . . . that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.* Similarly, when he interprets the seventh commandment, he declares that the lustful look is as bad as actual adultery. Luckily it is not, from the point of view of social morality; but Jesus was not thinking of social morality so much as of the disciples themselves. He was showing that the inner impulse had to be guarded against, and that it was not enough to prohibit the act, if the springs of conduct were left untouched. All his precepts on such love are due to the conviction that the religious life must be inward, concerned primarily with motive ; the dominating interest is the creation of the religious character in those who gathered round him to understand and obey his God and Father. The hope of the Kingdom was that such inward relationships to God would then become the law of human life ; but, while Jesus was no mere futurist, he lived under the apocalyptic hope in such a way as to believe in the urgency of the new law for those who were the nucleus of the new order. The pressing task was to create a fellowship within which the will and character of God the Father came into action ; how this might shape itself in the far future was another matter, with which he was not concerned.

Seen in historical perspective, therefore, the love enjoined by Jesus covers his entire teaching upon the ethical relationships of life among those who were prepared to be Companions of the Way. Such love does not count up its good deeds, as though they constituted any claim upon the favour of God ; it does not act with an eye to an audience, expecting praise and notice ; it never asks, 'How often am I to forgive ?' ; neither does it ever think it has done enough. For such true love to others is to be the expression of an inward nature which instinctively issues in such a noble life, catching the very spirit of the generous God in the fellowship of Jesus, and seeking to act in its own small sphere as the Father acts towards all.

What we see in the gospels and indeed throughout the whole of the NT is this love expressing itself in various shades of meaning, from the heroic form in which it inspires self-sacrifice for one's fellows, to the not less trying duty of forgiving injuries ; from the thoughtful affection which avoids harshness and selfishness or which under the strain of intercourse refuses to lose its temper, to the patient effort after good-nature and generosity even to the surly and malicious at one's side. As love to God, it will face hardship and death itself for the sake of loyalty ; it will endure suffering in the conviction that God's love has a purpose behind the ordeal ; and it will give itself to service of His will with joy. As brotherly love, it will avoid enmity and ill-will, even when sorely tempted to retaliate ; it will not lose heart or hope for others. And it will do all this without any selfish hope of reward, conscious only that those who love goodness and live by motives of love, duty, and service, discover that confidence in the eternal goodness of their God is thereby enlarged within them, and that thus they are entering more fully into the meaning and value of life. *You must love your enemies and help them, you must lend to them without expecting any return ; then you will have a rich reward, you will be sons of the Most High.* This is the outcome of faith in the Father as Jesus reveals His character and purpose. Or, as Luther puts it, in his tract *De Libertate Christiana*, " from faith flows forth love and joy in the Lord, and from love a cheerful, willing, free spirit, that serves one's neighbour voluntarily, without taking any account of gratitude or ingratitude, of praise or blame, of gain or loss. For one does not serve in order to lay men under obligations, nor does one distinguish between friends and enemies, nor does one look to gratitude or ingratitude, but one most freely and willingly spends oneself and all one has."

4

You must love your enemies. The disciples are bidden extend their love even to private and personal enemies in their circle, not simply to neighbours or fellow-members of the community who have to be forgiven for their injurious conduct, but to outsiders who are unfriendly and malevolent.

The teaching on this point is preserved in a double tradition, which requires some detailed study :

Matthew v. 43 f.	Luke vi. 27 f.
You have heard the saying, 'You must love your neighbour *and hate*	*I tell you, my hearers, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you :*

your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven: he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain	*bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. . . .*
on the just and the unjust. For if you love only those who love you, what reward do you get for that? do not the very taxgatherers do as much? and if you only salute your friends, what is special about that? do not the very pagans do as much?	*If you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Why, even sinful men love those who love them. If you help only those who help you, what merit is that to you? Why, even sinful men do that. If you only lend to those from whom you hope to get something, what credit is that to you? Even sinful men lend to one another, so as to get a fair return. No, you must love your enemies and help them, you must lend to them without expecting any return.*

In the Lucan version, saluting one's friends or brothers becomes ' helping one's helpers,' the stress falling on a friendly disposition. This is brought out by the subsequent emphasis on deeds, especially deeds of neighbourly lending. But these and other linguistic variations leave the essential truth of the teaching unaffected, except that the Lucan version reflects a period when *enemies* meant hostile adversaries of the Christian cause, whereas in the Matthaean version it denotes rather personal opponents. The latter was uppermost in the original reference of the counsel, for while the enmity of such opponents was conceived by Jesus to include a hatred of his followers' faith, it was primarily the bitter, backbiting, angry life of villages and townships in Galilee which he had in mind.

The term *salute* (*ἀσπάσησθε*) in Matthew might literally be taken as almost a synonym for *love*. In classical Greek the verb could be used alongside of *ἀγαπᾶν*, as e.g. in the well-known passages of Plato's *Republic* (330 c, 357 b, c): "You seem to have no great love for (*οὐ σφόδρα ἀγαπᾶν*) money.

Those who have made money esteem it (ἀσπάζονται) twice as much as those who have inherited money. . . . Are there not certain goods of life which we esteem (or welcome, ἀσπαζόμενοι) for their own sakes ? . . . And are there not others which we love (ἀγαπῶμεν) both for their own sakes and for the sake of their results, valuing (ἀσπαζόμεθα) them on both accounts ? " The term ἀσπάζεσθαι obviously denotes here and elsewhere more than ' to welcome ' ; it approximates to the meaning of ' to be keen upon,' and this eager, desiring affection links it to ἀγαπᾶν. But in Matthew it denotes the Oriental greeting or salutation, a demonstrative expression of friendliness, which implied hearty wishes for the other person's welfare and happiness.

In an early Christian fragment (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, x. 1224) Luke vi. 28 appears thus : " Pray for your enemies. For he who is not against you is for you [i.e. ix. 50] ; he who to-day is far away will be near you to-morrow." The second motive is an old Greek maxim, attributed to Bias (Arist., *Rhet.* 1389, b 23, Diog. Laert. i. 87) amongst others. But such prudential motives are out of keeping with the original word and aim of Jesus.

What Jesus had in mind when he forbade hatred of one's ' enemies ' is not easy to determine. There were quiet, peaceable people in the land, among whom he found many of his best adherents. But on the whole Jews were living in a state of religious and racial feuds which were in part the result of nationalism, defensive and offensive. They scorned the Greeks and loathed their liege-lords the Romans—so much so that their churlishness became a byword among the very people who were often attracted by their high morality and monotheism. Tacitus was but reflecting a widespread feeling when he wrote of their ' adversus omnes alios hostile odium ' (*Hist.*, v. 5). Even within the borders of their own land the Shammaites were bigoted against their ecclesiastical opponents, the taxgatherers were regarded as pariahs, the

Galileans were frequently derided by the orthodox southerners, Samaritans were eschewed with an antipathy which they returned in kind, and there was mutual strain between the scrupulous precisians and the masses or *Am ha-arets*[1] whom they viewed not always unjustly as boors, illiterate, and disreputable. This divisive spirit is in human nature, but Jesus met it in the Palestinian life of his own day, and for it he lays down warnings and rules. Such local animosity was one of the main forces against which he had to contend in Galilee and Judaea. It is possible that in these Galilean counsels of the Sermon on the Mount he was thinking of the patriotic nationalism which inculcated enmity towards opponents; there was a party which advocated force as the best way of restoring the Kingdom and rescuing it from Gentile overlords, and his sayings on love, it is held by some, " must have seemed to be the direct opposite of the patriotic teaching of the school of thought started by Judas of Galilee, and to be deliberately intended as an alternative to it."[2] But this does not by any means cover all his purpose. It is the private life of disciples for which he is laying down these precepts, the life which was familiar to him in the townships and villages of the country, where life was often embittered by animosities and feuds of a personal kind. After the disaster of A.D. 70, when some of the finer rabbis reflected upon the reasons for this sad providence of God, they set it down to the sins of the people, and specified the sins in particular as greed and hatred. " Men loved Mammon and hated one another," was the explanation of one devout rabbi.[3] It is to this social problem that the words on ' love ' primarily refer. No doubt, his propaganda of heroic self-sacrifice, of love to others in the sense of serving and aiding them freely, came to rival the propaganda of militant piety with its fanatical heroism, and ultimately to supplant it as a means of bringing in the true Kingdom; in his service men were taught to find an outlet for the warm devotion which hitherto had seemed to have its only channel in the fighting Galilean temperament. But the immediate object he had in mind was to raise his followers above the level of the fretting, social antipathies which vexed life in ordinary intercourse. Few things were to him more ungodly than the provincial animosities of his country. What prevents this from being recognized is partly the English term 'enemy,' which carries with it martial associations. These are not within the horizon of Jesus, however, any more than in the commandment, *Thou shalt not kill.* He speaks of social life as he and his hearers knew it in Galilee, exposed to bad temper and ill-feeling, and permeated with the love of scandal and the virulent, petty vendettas which often accompany narrow virtue and rigid piety in local communities. Here, among neighbours who are not neighbourly, lies the real test of love. *Pray for those who abuse you* (ἐπηρεαζόντων) is the Lucan phrase for the injunction of Jesus to such sufferers. The Greek word means 'to libel,' in the only other passage where it occurs in the NT; for in 1 Peter iii. 16 the apostle is referring to pagan slanders on the Christian life. But here at anyrate the term brings out precisely the situation which, as the context shows, was present to the mind of Jesus, for ἐπηρεάζειν always carried a touch of wantonness with it (see Cope's note in his edition of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, on ii. 4); it suggests the conduct of people who interfered with or thwarted the plans and wishes of others, even although they themselves gained nothing by it. The interference might take the form of abusive insults or spiteful acts or malicious injuries, but it invariably was a wanton attack, which on that very account was all the more obnoxious. Now, such insults and personal injuries, which make life hard and sore, are apt to stir resentment or the desire for retaliation, sometimes both. The sufferer may withdraw as far as possible from the offender, by way of self-protection, keeping aloof from him and breaking off intimate relations. He may further be tempted to retaliate, if opportunity offers, in word or deed, perhaps even to seek an opportunity for retaliating. It is against all this that Jesus speaks, when he bids his followers love their enemies. *Pray for them*, he teaches, i.e. be their intercessors instead of their judges. The instinct of wounded dignity is to brood over the insult or injury, until the offence may be exaggerated, whether the offence be negative or positive. "Everybody must have observed in his fellow-men, and he must be a very excellent or a very obtuse person who has not observed in himself, at least a tendency, requiring to be guarded against, to exaggerate not merely personal offences but personal neglects, slights, and other *misères*. It is hardly too much to say that presumed negative injuries of this kind rankle in sensitive dispositions even more than open and positive attacks or affronts."[1] It is the latter, however, of which Jesus primarily speaks in these words. He warns his followers against yielding to rancour and recrimination, against any recourse to repugnance or traditional animosity. Pray for the offender, he counsels. Why? Not simply that he may abandon his evil ways and stop defaming or persecuting you, but that he may realize his mistake and give up the wrong he is doing to himself as well as to you. Such is the divine method, a refusal to give up treating such irritating enemies as objects of God's purpose, simply because they prove virulent, unbrotherly, and harsh. Jesus teaches that we owe it to them to pray for them, not scornfully but in a sincere pity for their misguided actions, since they are injuring themselves as well as injuring us. No outrages can exempt the disciple from his Godlike duty of love. This inward attitude is the first demand of Jesus upon his followers when they are wronged by others. He does not say that it will invariably be successful; indeed, he is thinking rather of the effect produced on the disciple than on the churl and scoundrel. Such love may not always soften or win over an opponent, though often it does. Still, it has this reward and result, that it brings the disciple nearer to God, making him more like the generous Father, in whom love goes far beyond any deserts of man, and "with whom cold hearts are counted castaway." He who repays an insult or an injury by patience and kindness may not shame the other out of his evil courses, but at anyrate he has added a cubit to his own moral stature.

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[1] These " were not deliberate ' sinners,' heretics or dissolute, but they failed in that they did not observe the minutiae of the religious laws as did the Pharisees " (Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 276).

[2] F. J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, i. 290.

[3] Strack-Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, 366 f.

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[1] Saintsbury, *The Peace of the Augustans*, p. 197.

Love to one's enemies does not therefore mean an attitude of moral indifference in man any more than it does in God. *I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven: he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.* This is a rapid and poetical touch of Jesus. Nature, say the moderns, makes no distinction between good and bad on earth. Poets like Goethe and Matthew Arnold protest that saint and scoundrel fare alike, in sunshine and shower:

> Streams will not curb their pride
> The just man not to entomb,
> Nor lightnings go aside
> To give his virtues room:
> Nor is that wind less rough
> Which blows a good man's barge.
> Nature, with equal mind,
> Sees all her sons at play.

And so forth. But such is not the meaning of Jesus. He had noticed this 'equal mind' in Galilee. He knew how the sun shone upon the fields of the churlish and impious peasant as brightly as upon the fields of the kindly farmer, how rain fell as amply on the crops of the dishonest as on the grain of the devout. What then? Had his soul been less pious, he would have inferred that nature was ruled by a Power blind to moral distinctions. But he saw in this an illustration of God's ample generosity ; what he gives is not a philosophy of nature but an employment of nature to urge for human conduct a disinterested goodness. Looking on nature with an eye to its blessings, he sees that such boons are not confined to the deserving who worship God and are kind to their fellows, and from this he pleads for a similarly wide display of 'love.' Do not let your gifts and kindness to others be limited, either. That is, he does not infer God's goodness from the divine bounty in nature, but on the contrary, as he believes in the Father's loving will, he sees this illustrated in nature, where there are no fences or limits to sun and rain. At the same time, there are gifts which God cannot bestow like sunshine and rain, gifts like forgiveness which require moral receptivity. *If for all your evil* (πονηροὶ ὄντες—faulty as you are) *you know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?* As God's love, therefore, is not an indiscriminate kindness which is confined to outward benefits, so the mutual love by means of which men reproduce the spirit of His order and household, cannot be an affable good-nature which cheerfully ignores moral distinctions. Friendliness and gentle patience will do much to induce offenders to repent, in the sphere of personal and private intercourse, for which alone Jesus is giving rules. It is thus, and not by *resisting* or resenting the *evil* of rude, malignant fellow-beings, that the bitter enmities of life are likely to be removed. He requires from His followers this initial generosity towards their private foes, although such love must develop, in order to do its perfect work, into a moral treatment of the offenders in question (see above, p. 104).

5

One item in these ethical claims of Jesus deserves to be mentioned here, for, although it does not come strictly under the class of 'love' words, it has been widely misconceived. In

Matthew v. 39 we read: *I tell you, you are not to resist an injury: whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well.* Luke (vi. 29) generalizes this saying: *if a man strikes you on the one cheek, offer him the other as well*, and when Matthew's version continues by mentioning a judicial action (*and whoever wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well*), Luke turns this into an act of robbery (*if anyone takes or seizes your coat, do not deny him your shirt as well*). The Matthaean form is closer to the original here. What is meant is not, of course, an injury inflicted in order to wound the body; it is an insult, a piece of social insolence. To strike a person on the right cheek, i.e. with the back of the right hand, was a stinging form of showing contempt. Origen thought that this saying was one of those in the gospels which could not have been meant literally; as he rightly saw, "when a man strikes, if he acts naturally, he strikes the left cheek" (*Philocalia*, i. 19)—as indeed he must, unless he is left-handed! What Origen failed to see, oddly enough, was that Jesus was not thinking of a man going up to someone opposite him and attempting to knock him down; the context shows that he is referring to Oriental expressions of scorn and contempt. When he speaks of *not resisting evil*, he is alluding not to injuries which were intended to draw blood or to do violence, but to the slanderous, despiteful exhibitions of malevolence between neighbour and neighbour. The 'enemy' here is a neighbour who indulges in private animosity by treating one with the extreme form of insolent contempt. Problems like those of military service or criminal procedure are not within the range of this word. It is intended for those who were suffering from the insulting provocations of private life, especially as Jesus knew them from his acquaintance with small country villages and towns, where people were hurt by 'the strife of tongues,' as the psalmist called it, by the bad temper which often vented itself in rude outbursts, the bad feeling which indulged in sheer spite and scorn. To bear such stinging insults calmly is one of the most severe tests of 'love,' as Jesus taught it. They make the sufferer hot and angry. Indeed, "there are few tests of a man's spiritual condition more searching and decisive than the temper with which he bears unmerited insult and railing speech. I do not refer to mere self-command, to the self-respect which forbids an answer in kind, and imposes an external calmness of manner on a swelling indignation within. The man of the world, when it suits him, can attain to this much, which yet is not little. The question is not one of self-mastery under, but of superiority to, insult, which feels no anger or resentment at insolence or contempt; and this, not from an abject and craven spirit, but from living on a plane of feeling up to which personal insult does not reach."[1]

For such outrages the Mishnah provided that a money commutation was possible, but Jesus ignores this legal way out; he presses for the moral attitude which transcends any such reaction to an insult or injury. The true follower of his cause must be above tit for tat, in this trying relationship; he must neither answer back nor hit back, but submit patiently, yielding to the rude person who slaps him, and refraining from any effort to retaliate. It is humiliating to be affronted and insulted, but Jesus bids his disciples refrain from encountering provocation and malevolence with their own weapons.

In the Matthaean Sermon on the Mount this precept leads up to the definite teaching upon 'love,' whilst in Luke it is included in that teaching, as one illustration of the principle—although, by omitting *right* before *cheek*, Luke does not bring out the specifically Oriental form of the insult, and indeed suggests that the blow was an act of malicious violence, instead of a contemptuous slap. Chrysostom (*Hom. in Matth.*, xviii. 1) understood the real meaning: Jesus, he observes, "singled out here the supreme form of insult, and noted what seems to be the most opprobrious of all blows, the blow on the cheek, so full of insolence." The addition of *right* by some texts of Luke is harmonistic, but the omission of the adjective in some early forms of the Matthew-text (e.g. the old Syriac and *k* of the old Latin) is due to a failure to understand what the original meant.

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[1] Cotter Morison's *Service of Man* (chap. vii).

6

The combination of love to one's neighbour and love to God is put in the reply of Jesus to the jurist who asked him what he considered to be the chief or supremely important command in the Law. He replied, in terms of the Shema (see above, p. 83), *You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole mind, and with your whole strength. Such*, he answered, *is the chief command.* Then, giving a larger answer than was expected, he added, *The second is this : You must love your neighbour as yourself.* Mark's version prefixes the words, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*, which is omitted by Matthew and Luke as superfluous ; but the monotheistic formula may be original, for Jesus may well have cited the entire opening of the Shema in order to remind men, as Wellhausen remarks, that monotheism is no theory but a practical conviction, a motive for the inmost disposition and for behaviour to one's neighbour. At anyrate it is on the latter aspect that he fixes attention by the remarkable addition of Leviticus xix. 18 to Deuteronomy vi. 5. No one before had put these two commands together so forcibly and fruitfully, as the summary of God's will for life, all other commands being deductions and inferences from them. This combination is one of the wonderful advances made by Jesus. Even although others had previously thought of setting the two commands together, none had done it so closely and powerfully.

A stray anticipation of this seems to have been preserved in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, an apocalyptic writing which emanated from some pre-Christian circle of devout Jews (see above, p. 105). *Love the Lord and your neighbour* (*Issachar* v. 2), *I loved the Lord, likewise every man* (*Issachar* vii. 6), and, *Love the Lord through all your life* (or, with all your soul), *and one another with a true heart* (*Dan* v. 3), are partial approximations to the statement of Jesus, although the latter is more definite and forcible. The 'Testaments' were much more prized in the Christian Church than among the rabbis; indeed, they owe their preservation to the Church, and there is no evidence to show that this teaching exercised much influence on Judaism even before A.D. 70. But, although the 'Testaments' have been edited and amplified by Christians, there is no need to regard such sayings as due to Christian influence.

In one tradition (Mark, Matthew) the collocation of the two commands is stated by Jesus and (Mark) warmly commended by the scribe, who in turn is praised by Jesus for his insight. In the Lucan tradition it is assigned to the jurist. If the latter be the original form of the story, the fact of the Marcan tradition appropriating the statement for Jesus indicates that it was sufficiently striking and unfamiliar. On the other hand, Luke's re-shaping may be due to literary interests, as he developed the dialogue into the further stage of 'Who is my neighbour?' In either case, with the evidence of the Testaments in view, we may recognize that such a deep estimate of religion was possible to finer spirits of the day; if it did not originate with someone outside the immediate circle of Jesus, it could be appreciated there.

The Lucan form of the dialogue brings out not only (i) the combination of love to God and love to one's neighbour, but, in the appended parable, it (ii) extends 'neighbour' to cover an outsider, and (iii) it describes neighbourly 'love' as personal service and interest shown towards any who require help.

It was a jurist who raised the question to which the parable is an answer, but Jesus did not put a rabbi into his story; the hero is a Samaritan, and as the difference between Jews and Samaritans turned on the issue of the cultus, not of the moral law, a priest and a Levite are introduced as the foil to the good or kind Samaritan. When a Semite asked, Who is my neighbour ?, he commonly wanted to know whom he need not love; he was anxious to ascertain where he might draw the line, outside of which he could remain indifferent or even hate with impunity. The jurist who asked Jesus, *Who is my neighbour ?*, need not be suspected of harbouring such a design, but his question was not put from any eager desire to understand and practise neighbourly love. He was *anxious to make an excuse for himself.* Ostensibly he had sought an answer to the question about a footing in the life to come, but when Jesus promptly replied that he already knew the conditions, i.e. love to God and to one's neighbour, he raised a debating point. *Do that and you will live*, Jesus had said. But instead of agreeing to act upon his own high principle, the jurist seeks to evade the issue and to excuse himself for this hesitation by pleading the prior theological difficulty of defining a *neighbour*. *But who is my neighbour ?* Jesus tells him in effect that such a question need never be raised by anyone who is honestly prepared to follow the human and humane instincts of pity and sympathy. One point of the parable is, that no elaborate theological study is needful for true neighbourly love. Jesus sends the jurist to school with a Samaritan heretic, who by his prompt consideration and kindly help proved that he knew the law and will of God in this matter better than professional, orthodox Jews. The Samaritan traveller had not the technical advantages of the priest and Levite; he had not been engaged in any ritual services at the temple, nor was he fortified by attendance at ceremonies. Yet he knew his duty as a man, the essential duty of neighbourly love.

The parable of the Three Travellers starts from the question, *Who is my neighbour ?*, i.e. whom am I to love ? It ends by suggesting *who is a real neighbour*, as though the original query had been about ' neighbour ' as the subject rather than the object of love. It may be that the parable originally was spoken in another connexion, but this is not a necessary solution, for neighbourliness is a reciprocal relationship, and the essential point made by Jesus is that kindness like this is what really makes people neighbours. The story shows that true neighbourly love is a personal service—not simply ' charity ' in the sense of giving money, but thoughtful, direct contact with any human being whose need touches our lives. The good Samaritan does not pass by the wounded traveller, as the priest and Levite did ; he goes out of his way to assist the sufferer, and becomes responsible for him. In short, the story is an apt illustration of Hosea vi. 6.

7

What Jesus criticized in the popular religion of his day, as the prophets had done before him, was the tendency to regard the ethical and spiritual element as mere items in the list of man's obligations towards God, and even upon occasion to allow ritual punctilios to take precedence of all others. This lies at the heart of his teaching on the Sabbath, for example ; it also explains his use of Hosea's great word, *I care for mercy* (*or*, lovingkindness), *not for sacrifice*, since nothing seemed to him more dangerous than a scrupulous regard for minutiae of legal observance which tended to make moral duties upon the whole less urgent. As we have seen (p. 14), the primary thought of Hosea was, love to the Lord; but this was inseparable from love to one's fellows, and it is on the latter element of the saying that Jesus lays such weight, although for him also such brotherly love was but the other side of love to God.

In Matthew this saying is twice quoted by Jesus (ix. 13 and xii. 7) to justify his humane, frank relations with men, as opposed to ritual restrictions (see above, pp. 86, 87). If it was not a favourite quotation of Jesus, we may at least recognize the penetrating spirit which led him to single out this great word. "To bring it out from its obscurity shows not only a knowledge of the letter of the Old Testament, but also a real appreciation of the genius of Hebrew religion."[1] When the Pharisees objected to him for associating with taxgatherers and other disreputable people, he replied, *Go and learn the meaning of this word, 'I care for lovingkindness, not for sacrifice* (*θυσίαν*),' *θυσία* being equivalent to any ritual absorption. The meaning, as he interprets it here, is that he will not allow any ceremonial scruple to prevent him from going where he is needed. In xii. 7 he implies that *θυσία* as adherence to sabbatarian laws must not be allowed to interfere with human needs ; when the rigid Pharisees condemned his disciples for having broken the sabbath by pulling ears of corn in the fields and eating them, his reply is : *If you had known what this meant, 'I care for lovingkindness, not for sacrifice,' you would not condemn men who are not guilty.* It was not till later that rabbinic tradition seized on this saying of Hosea, in the fine reassurance attributed to R. Jochanan ben Zakkai (*Aboth R. Nathan*, 4, 5), who was said to have consoled a disciple after the fall of Jerusalem and the cessation of the temple sacrifices by remarking, "Grieve not, my son, for we have an atonement which is just as good, namely, acts of mercy ; as the Scripture says, 'For I desire lovingkindness and not sacrifice.'"

8

Jesus saw no problem or conflict between love to God and love to man. Not because he fused them into one, but because for him love to God inspired love to man. He recognized direct love to God as expressed in prayer and worship as well as in the service of our fellow-men. But neither here nor indeed anywhere else in the NT is there any consciousness of the tendency to "resolve religion into love of man to man," which McLeod Campbell notes in his book on *The Nature of the Atonement* (Note 1) as being characteristic of some modern circles. Whereas in early Christianity, he observes, " man's relation to God was as truly the practical interest of life as was man's relation to man," nowadays " men seem as if they were awakening to the due feeling of the beauty and of the obligation of love to man as brother, but not as what is quickened by the faith that there is one Father who is our Father, nor as a natural development of love to Him." One cause of this has been the undue stress upon religion as distinct from social morality, resulting in the attempt to construct a morality which is equivalent to religion itself. In the first century A.D. the one thinker who was apparently conscious of this tendency is Philo. He had noted in his book *De Decalogo* (22) the danger of this humanitarian exaggeration. In speaking of the fifth commandment, for example, he points out how it concludes the first table of the Law (i.e. the specific duties towards God), and how some connect it with the second table of duties to one's fellow-creatures. From this he is led to discuss the exaggerations of moral and religious feeling. " Often it has happened that some have attached themselves to one of these divisions and neglected the other apparently ; for being filled with a sincere yearning for piety they have said good-bye to all other interests and devoted the whole of their life to the service of God. While others, who considered that beyond their duties to their fellow-men there was no good, have adhered simply to their connexion with men, in social zeal affording all alike the use of their possessions, and also endeavouring as far as possible to alleviate their woes. The latter you might properly call philanthropic persons (φιλανθρώπους), the former devout (φιλοθέους). But," Philo concludes, " they are only semi-good, for those alone who have a reputation in both departments are perfect." His argument is, that the decalogue makes devotion to God and duty towards one's fellow-men inseparable parts of religion.

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[1] Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, pp. 202 f.

Yet his real view hardly holds religion and the moral life of service together. Love to God is for him at its highest a mystic rapture of bodiless union with the Deity, which lifts man away from the outer world ; after this soaring experience of Divine love the soul falls back into its normal state. The result is that he fails to establish an organic connexion between this mystic love of God and the moral relationship of man to man, since the former tends to be isolated. Love for God in Philo's system is not really a lasting relationship between the soul and God, but a transient and occasional experience. Again, for love to man he chooses the term *φιλανθρωπία* on account of its universalistic range, as being more cosmopolitan than any other, to describe what is more than love to one's family or people. Yet this tends to resolve brotherly love into a vague sense of common humanity, instead of connoting direct personal helpfulness. What he generally means by the term is not a definite relation towards men and women so much as the sublimated sense of being part of the human whole ; it denotes for him man's general duty as a member of the race, an emotion and an idea due to the common humanity of man, as though to be humane and kind was the duty of a human creature as such. Still, in spite of the defects in Philo's scheme, it is interesting as an attempt to meet what was for him a real problem—a problem which evidently did not meet Jesus in Palestine. Jesus saw religion spoiling morality in certain directions ; he did not see morality usurping the place of religion. For him piety and duty were inseparable, since love to one's fellow-men was determined by the conception of the Realm or Reign of God as an end, which not only threw light upon the object and character of mutual love, but supplied the motive for it. Christianity, as Jesus taught it, is ethical but it is also a religion ; it is ethical because it is the religion which he described it to be, in which love to God is impossible for people who are selfish or uncharitable.

The idea of unselfish, devoted love to one's fellows being enough as a religion, does not seem to have occurred to any writer in the NT. Neither this nor the question of atheism came within their horizon. It was assumed, of course, that at the judgment of God the fate of outsiders, who had never heard the gospel, was determined by their moral character, and the determining principle was to be generous love. This is visible in the parable of Matthew xxv. 31 f.; *in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness* (or, as we say, lives a good life) *is accepted by him;* Paul had no doubt about the divine acceptance of pagans who, though they had not the Law, did *by nature* (instinctively) *the Law's requirements*, living conscientiously up to their lights. But it is worth notice that Philo's problem did not present itself to the NT writers. Apparently in the world around them there was no effort to make a religion out of " the charities that soothe and heal and bless." *Love is of God*, it was held by some Christians; but the inference was that those who claim to belong to God must love one another, not that brotherly love by itself means the presence of God, although in one sense that might have been freely granted as a good beginning. To be self-sacrificing, to live for others, to be generous, forgiving, and unselfish in the network of human intercourse—this ideal was in line with the humanitarianism of the Stoic philosophy, which had a truly religious tinge; we are rather surprised to find that no movement seems to have started from such a position and worked out the theory that one might be unconsciously reaching God in the practice of such virtues, and that, instead of thinking about God at all, it would be better to think of one's fellows. Nevertheless, such is the case. Even the practical James, who encountered spurious forms of religious love, never dreams of opposing them by anything like an ethic which should be a substitute for religion. He insists that *pure, unsoiled religion*, religion at its centre and in its simplest terms, *means this: to care for widows and orphans in their trouble* (that is, personal service), *and to keep oneself from* *the stain of the world* (that is, personal purity or holiness). But this is the essential function of religion, not its origin, for such religion is *in the judgment of God the Father*, it is the harvest yielded on the soil of human nature as *the Word roots itself with power to save your souls.* And the Word is the Christian gospel or revelation, not a divinely implanted instinct. In other words, the question whether goodness is not enough, whether a life of kind, affectionate duty does not suffice as a religion, whether a loving character ought not to be the chief end of man—this question is not answered in the NT, simply because it is never raised. Faith or belief without love is a recurring problem which distresses the early Church, but not love without faith.

This emphasis of Jesus upon obedience to the commands of kindness and helpfulness ought not to be allowed to obliterate two considerations in his teaching. For one thing (*a*), the counsels on neighbourly and forgiving love are designed to show how the follower of Jesus may enter into the true nature of the Father, not to outline any programme for making a better world. The disciple is not taught to think so much of the effect which his conduct will produce in the world as of the effect it will produce in his relationships with God, just as he is forbidden to think of any recompense accruing to him in the shape of recognition or praise as a proper reward for his actions. It is only deeds of uncalculating goodness which count, Jesus teaches. These alone correspond to the character of God the Father, and as a disciple does them, even when they may affect other people, he is not to be thinking either of that or of what it may bring him. Such results as brotherly love produces are primarily in the sphere of personal fellowship with God. Again (*b*), Jesus did not identify brotherly love with love to God in the sense that the devotional life was subordinated. He valued and practised private devotions; he taught his disciples to enter into their inner chambers when they prayed; the religious truths of loneliness and contemplation, of inward detachment of soul and of meditation, which in later developments of Christian love have assumed such proportions, were implicit in his discipline for the religious life, his sole concern being to prevent them from being degraded into a means of acquiring merit or of diverting the ardent soul from everyday duties.

An indirect proof of his refusal to reduce religion to social service or humanitarianism is provided in Matthew v. 23, 24, where, after bidding a worshipper, even when about to offer his gift at the altar, go away and make up his quarrel with someone whom he has offended, he does not suggest that this is the end of the matter; the word is, *first be reconciled to your brother, then come back and offer your gift.* The teaching is that only gifts offered by 'peace-makers' are acceptable to God, not that the brotherly spirit is a substitute for worship. The final relationship is the personal worship of God. On broader lines, as we have noticed, he teaches that while there can be no real love for God in a life which is indifferent to the duties of charity, helpfulness, forgiveness, and patience, or which avoids the sphere where men encounter those who injure and irritate them, nevertheless such dutiful and forgiving love is not by itself religion. Worship must not be allowed to supersede brotherly love, yet neither is brotherly love to supersede worship; that is one aspect of the matter. The other is, that love to God is the source and spring of brotherly love among his followers. The inward disposition which moves his followers to transcend selfishness, prejudice, and vindictiveness in their relations with other men is viewed by Jesus as the outcome of their relation to God the Father; in one sense it is spontaneous, since it is not evoked by any external command, but in another sense it may be called obedience to the orders of the Household, since the personal experience of the Father's love brings with it an instinctive consciousness of obligation.

Such counsels to patience and forbearing love were not mere words in the early Church. Few sayings were prized more and practised earlier than these. Justin Martyr claims that he can point to a number of pagans who had been won over by the sight of Christians keeping the words of the Lord about refusing to retaliate. After citing the precepts in Matthew v. 22, 39 f., he declares that such a charitable spirit as Christ enjoined had profoundly moved many " who have come into contact with us ; their characters have been transformed from violence and overbearing temper, subdued either because they have watched the steady patience of their Christian neighbours' lives, or because they have observed how fellow-travellers showed extraordinary submission under unjust exactions, or because they have had experience of others in business " (*Apol.*, i. 16).

PART B

PAULINISM

By ' Paulinism ' I mean the interpretation of Christian truth and life as we find it in the letters which the apostle wrote during the last ten years of his career. Paul had not only vision but a mind, and an independent mind which was profoundly religious. The interpretation he offers is many-sided ; here and there it reflects a growth in his mind ; also, it presents various aspects and elements drawn from the world of inherited beliefs around him, Christian and pagan, as he thought out his experience of the gospel. His statement of the faith forms a special section of thought in the NT ; for, even when the same truth or belief is held elsewhere, it is generally stated by the apostle with an accent of his own, and, despite the variety of expressions and categories, there is a religious unity in the thought of Paul. We are dealing here with no mere heterogeneous collection of ideas, caught up from contemporary cults or apocalyptic schemes, and set forth casually, as practical needs appealed to the writer.

In handling the material, we shall follow the same order as in the previous section, discussing God's love for men, man's love for God, and mutual Christian love.

I

FOR Paul the gospel is a gospel of redemption or deliverance, and he therefore concentrates attention upon the proof of God's love afforded by redemption. It is an axiom for the apostle that the fact of moral evil brings out the love of God as nothing else can. Through all his apocalyptic categories, this interest comes out predominantly, that redemption is the supreme manifestation of God's love, for it reveals the truth and fact that God loves us with a love that survives our sins, a love that lives to draw us from our sins into our true life within His fellowship.

The apostle does not use Nature to illustrate God's love. Nature to him is a manifestation of the divine wisdom and power (Romans i. 18 f.), but only once does he refer to providence and Nature as Jesus does, in proof of God's goodness to men, and this is not in his letters but in a speech at Lystra (Acts xiv. 17): God *did not leave himself without a witness, giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, giving you food and joy to your heart's content*, where he is speaking in terms of the local Anatolian nature-religion. "In the words in which St. Paul appealed to a simple audience of Lycaonians, the fountains of Ibriz are a witness to the Divine power, that it did good and gave men fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. The speaker knew his audience, and caught the exact tone of religious feeling that sounded in their hearts."[1] But usually the apostle saw the goodness of God in this, that He loved sinful men, in their moral rebellion against His law. Sinful 'men' who had forfeited their rights to share His life, not simply Israel. In the special passage where he deals with the problem of Israel as a nation in relation to the saving purpose of God (Romans ix.-xi.), he does cite the OT language of love for Israel : *Jacob I loved but Esau I hated. I will call her 'beloved' who was not beloved* (ix. 13, 25). He can even go to the length of saying, as a patriotic member of the People, that God's original call to Israel must somehow hold good still ; *so far as the gospel goes, they are enemies of God* ; *but so far as the election goes, they are beloved for their fathers' sake* (xi. 28). It is a characteristic and pathetic expression of his faith in the continuous purpose of God, of his conviction that the divine aim had not failed and could not fail ; *for God never goes back upon his gifts and call.* But this use of the term in a particularistic sense is by itself. In stating the sweep and range of the gospel, the apostle believes it is humanity, not Israel, who are the real object of the divine love in redemption. For redemption is no longer a supernatural crisis at the end of the national drama, but a deliverance of the human soul already inaugurated by God in the triumph of Jesus Christ over the allied powers of Sin and Death, which, like demonic forces, have invaded the world of men. Whether Paul puts it in this way, however, or in metaphorical terms of a judicial process, the heart of his religion is belief in a new status of the soul which is ultimately due to an act of gracious love on the part of God Himself.

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[1] Sir W. M. Ramsay, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (extra volume, pp. 119, 120).

The sense of a divine love in nature has been one of the later developments in Christianity. Like the Platonic Socrates,[1] the apostle seems to have been much more interested in human nature than in nature. As one trained in Jewish piety he believed in the divine power within creation, but the picturesque impressions of nature and its beauty do not appear to have meant much to him. "His eye was not satisfied with seeing the fairness of the country any more than the majesty of cities. He did not study the flittings of shadows on the hills, or even the movements of the stars in their courses."[1] Nature to him was the work of God indeed, but his consciousness of divine love was too absorbingly moral to be interested in any sphere except that in which God re-made the soul of man.

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[1] "I never see you going outside the city walls," says Phaedrus. "You must excuse me, dear friend," Socrates replies. "But I am a lover of learning, and fields and trees won't teach me anything ; people in the city do" (*Phaedrus*, 230 D).

I

The conviction that Jesus Christ had suffered for the sins of men was part of the inheritance of the apostle from the primitive community. *I delivered unto you that which I also received* (in the παράδοσις), *namely, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again. . . . So we preach*, says the apostle, all of us. But he had his own statement of this truth. Starting from the fact that a desperate moral situation had to be met, he recognized in the Christian redemption that love was the motive. God's love was the source of the reconciliation which had been brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the source, not merely the effect. As for the death of the Lord, Paul seems to have conceived that this moral situation of man not only called for but obtained such an act of self-sacrifice. That some sacrifice was required, he took for granted. But what amazed and thrilled him was to discover in this sacrifice the love of God. Here we come upon a distinctive element in his interpretation, which distinguished it not simply from apocalyptic hopes about the divine intervention in history but from the contemporary religious thought of the Church. The latter was in sympathy with his general view, but he it was who penetrated to this fundamental conception of God's action.

One real service rendered by the apocalyptic view of history was that it enabled men to conceive of God acting in time and history with a final and transcendent action. Since there was a purpose in history, such as belief in 'the covenant' implied, all that happened was far more than a vague series of events or an indefinite cycle of ages. The apocalyptic conception had its drawbacks, but it did aid belief in some intervention of the divine will of love ; at anyrate history was no mere illusion, no futile flux, and still less any mere accidental symbol of inward truth ; there was a real sphere for God entering the life of man. This, and the corresponding need of appreciating the function of the Old Testament ethically, may be specially overheard in Romans. Hence, as the apostle looked at the Cross, or rather at the living Lord who had been crucified, he felt, as George Herbert puts it,

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[1] Jowett, *Epistles of St. Paul*, ii. 204.

> No faint proffer
> Thou madest there, no insufficient offer.

The prophetic anticipations are valued as they indicate a real purpose of God to deal, as He did in Christ, with the power of sin in the race finally and fully. This historic context is one of the elements which differentiate early Christianity from the mystery-religions, where the sufferings of the deity do not bring salvation as they do in the gospel.

Three classical passages are Galatians ii. 20, 2 Corinthians v. 14, and Romans v. 8.

The words in Galatians are evoked by deep personal emotion : *the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me*. It is emotion evoked by experience. What stirred the experience was not cool reflection upon the predicates of an apocalyptic messiah, but a personal relationship resting on the conviction that the loving will of God took form in Jesus Christ. Paul " must have been convinced by the narratives of the first disciples or by personal impression that Jesus was entirely devoted to the task not merely of preaching the love of God but of acting as its incarnation in his every deed and word, and of preaching it so attractively that sinners were able to take courage in view of that love. . . . In particular, he must in some way, perhaps from the words of institution of the Lord's Supper, have gained the conviction that Jesus did not dumbly endure his sufferings and death, but took them upon himself with full consciousness and voluntary self-sacrifice, as an essential part of his task, in obedience to his Father."[1] *He loved me and* (καὶ) *gave himself up for me.* The love led to sacrifice. This is the basis of the synoptic tradition, where the death of Jesus is such a sequel to his career as can only be described in terms of grace.

In 2 Corinthians v. 14 he avows, *I am controlled by the love of Christ* (the plural ἡμᾶς is here used for the singular), *convinced that as One has died for all, then all have died.* The context throws up the term ' reconciliation ' ; *God has reconciled me to himself* (taken me back to favour) *through Christ. . . . In Christ God reconciled the world to himself.* And this language recurs in Romans v. 1-10, which closes with the triumphant cry, *We triumph in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now enjoy our reconciliation.* Reconciliation is the relationship of the redeemed, which God has brought about in love through the sacrifice of His Son. *God proves his love for us by this, that Christ died for us when we were still sinners—when we were enemies.* For our present purpose it is enough to mark the underlying thought of the entire passage, viz. that God's love furnishes the basis of hope for the future; the outlook is eschatological. Having been thus taken back into favour, we need not fear the wrath to come, for here and now we experience this rich love of God as it *floods our hearts through the holy Spirit which has been given to us.* That is, our knowledge of it is not due to our wits and worth, but is a revelation, the revelation of an undeserved boon. We know God's love pre-eminently as forgiven creatures. What lies below Paul's technical arguments about justification and righteousness is the conviction of God as freely giving or offering His life to undeserving men, treating them for Christ's sake as His children, so that here and now they have a footing in the new messianic order of life, where Love rules, not wrath, wrath being reserved for those who are wilfully disobedient. The primary idea of a legal term like 'righteousness' is for Paul not legal at all; it is not task but gift, as a German can aptly say, not *Aufgabe* but *Gabe*, and the gift comes from and with love. When Paul speaks of 'grace,' he means the power and disposition of God's love to sinners, and this is parallel to the thought of His 'righteousness' being fully revealed on the Cross as the same saving power of divine goodness. The associations of 'righteousness' were not with a merely punitive judicial process, it must be recollected; in the ancient world to 'judge,' in this sense, was to order and rule a community, not simply to administer a code of legislation, so that the conception of God's 'righteousness' was not far from that of His 'realm' or 'reign.'

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[1] J. Weiss, *Paul and Jesus*, pp. 93, 94.

For Paul, love was no longer a counterbalancing factor in the judgment of God at the end; he did not conceive it as merely setting limits to the divine wrath and punishment. On the contrary, the central position for Paul was that God cannot forgive without love. The sacrifice of Christ was as necessary to exhibit His love as to express His condemnation of sin. The term 'righteousness' may sound technical and forbidding, but it is God's love viewed in the predominant aspect of holiness, with a supreme regard for moral realities. It might be described as the moral character of God calling for a corresponding moral character and attitude in men. Love means not easy indulgence, but an awful sense of what sin implies, and this carries with it the aim, at all costs, to bring that sense home to the sinner, for his own sake. A human being who forgives a cruel wrong often feels the sin far more than the actual offender. God always does, according to the apostle; the forgiving One cannot condone sin, for that would be to treat it as morally unreal, or as less real than it is. And because His pardon is more than the mere remitting of consequences, because it is reconciliation on the basis of moral reality, the apostle is able to declare that the death of Christ is at once the proof of His righteousness (Romans iii. 25 f.) and the expression of His love (Romans v. 8).

There is no problem in the relations between grace or love and righteousness in God's dealings with men. In Paul we find no trace of the notion that God's wrath was appeased by Christ as the representative of merciful love. 'Righteousness' to a modern ear sounds forbidding and primitive, but the reason why Paul uses this term so often, instead of 'love,' is that it was a classical word in the vocabulary of religion and theology, and perhaps because it had the advantage of suggesting moral relations. 'Righteousness' covered not only the religious relation between God and men, which was fundamental, but also the moral issues of that relationship. So, it may be said, did 'love.' But it was the Johannine movement which boldly made 'love' the dominant term, instead of 'righteousness.' Paul retained the latter, but even as he employs it, he indicates that 'righteousness,' 'grace,' and 'love' are all expressions for the same reality of God's love.

This divine love must have a meaning. It is self-sacrifice, the highest form of love known to us. *Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.* But the good man must be in some peril, from which there is no other way of saving him. It is not enough to say that self-sacrifice is the highest form and expression of love. "Love cannot be conceived of as doing anything gratuitously, merely to show its own depth," unless that thing, that supreme act, is called for by the circumstances of the case. "A man may love another so as to be willing to die for him, but he will not actually lay down his life merely to show his love."[1] There must be some urgent necessity; self-sacrifice must be a reasonable act. Now, in the apostle's theology the situation of men was desperate, owing to sin. He assumes that man is in evil case, estranged from God ; that even God cannot forgive sin without showing His moral integrity, and that therefore Christ had to die, Christ the sinless. This is explicitly stated in a passage like Romans iii. 21–26, where the apostle anticipates an objection to his gospel of free forgiveness. The Law, it might be urged, at least took sin seriously, and prevented any idea that God condoned iniquity. Paul retorts that his teaching about men being justified by faith was not open to any charge of laxity, as though God were now pleased to annul sin without more ado ; Christ's sacrificial death showed His sentence upon sin, His condemnation of it in full force ; it revealed for the first time God's real verdict upon it. And only thus could it be, as it was, a revelation of the loving favour of God to men who did not deserve it.

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[1] McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp. 32 f.

As Jesus had taught, so Paul assumes that the Father is revealed in this unmerited love, and consequently that God is Father to those who accept and enter into such a relationship of favour and fellowship. In Ephesians iii. 14 f. : *I kneel before the Father from whom every family* (πατρία) *in heaven and on earth is named*, the last word ὀνομάζεται requires to be paraphrased *derives its name and nature*, for the writer is picturing in a rapid phrase the inhabitants of time and eternity, angels and human beings alike, who owe their existence to God the Father. Not that he thinks of creation here, as he invokes God the Father ; it is (as in iv. 6) God the *Father of all* Christians. Another writer spoke of Christians belonging to the great Fellowship with its *myriads of angels in festal gathering, and the assembly of the first-born written in heaven*, i.e. of believers from the People throughout the ages past (Hebrews xii. 22, 23). In Ephesians the belief that the purpose of God in redemption was bound up with His control of the wide world led to this broad affirmation about all ' families ' on earth, though it would be prosaic to read it as a statement that every race or nation was originated by God.

The latter thought does recur once, in the speech of Paul at Athens (Acts xvii. 24 f.), where the apostle is made to show the common origin of all nations in order to prove the world-wide demand of God for repentance and faith. As Creator, He is above anything like idol-worship or images of Himself; as *he has created all nations from a common origin . . . he is close to each one of us, for it is in him that we live and move and exist—as some of your own poets have said,*

'We too belong to His race,'

τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν. Even here the term 'Father' is not employed for God the Creator of men; though the general thought of God as the one source of life is emphasized, we are not yet at the point when Christians could sing, with Bonaventura, of Love creating and re-creating human life—

Iste fecit, et refecit,
Amor, Jesu, perditum.

2

The appearance of Jesus in history as God's Son, living and dying and rising, marks thus for Paul the beginning of a new era in religion, or, rather, the beginning of that new and final order in which God is worshipped and trusted and served as a God of loving purpose and goodwill. Through his most abstruse arguments about sin and the Law this religious conviction shines clear. When Vinet said, "Faith does not consist in the belief that we are saved; it consists in the belief that we are loved," he was expressing a truth that throbs in Paul's dialectic about Christianity and Judaism, because it had entered into his own consciousness. Faith casts the human soul on the redeeming love of God which meets men in Jesus Christ. As man believes in this power of gracious devotion, he becomes more and more conscious of God's wonderful love, which is taking up all his life into itself; and so his personal life is heightened and intensified. Paul taught this as a fact of his own experience. The final power which had broken him down and raised him into a new life of peace and joy and strength was not dialectic about the Law, but the overwhelming emotion of God's love to him in Christ Jesus. The dawn of this upon his soul had been the great event of his religious experience. He could compare it to nothing except the work of God at the Creation itself (2 Corinthians iv. 6, v. 17). Dawn had come suddenly to him, flooding his life from above. It had been the conviction that Christ died out of love to him and to all men—dying a cruel death, which he had not deserved—that had altered his entire outlook. His conversion, like that of all noble natures, left him passionately devoted to this Lord; but, like Augustine and unlike Tolstoy (that strong, joyless Christian of the Slav race), Paul found that his experience of God's unmerited love raised a profound passion and emotion of love in return. For him, as for anyone who really meets love in God or in a fellow-creature, love was more than a joy and delight; it was a wonder, a wonder that thrills and humbles one more and more. As he once put it, *the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me.* This is one of the rare personal references to Christ's love, a passionate outburst which allows us to see far into the religious experience behind the apostle's theology. More commonly he speaks of the divine love for the Church, though even there it is with touches of deep feeling—as when he describes the aim and end of religious knowledge being *to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge* (Ephesians iii. 19).

As Hosea had seen, and the Deuteronomist after him, that Israel owed its very being to God's love, so Paul now and then expresses this glowing conviction in terms of a love-bond, which assures the Church of its lasting position within the purpose of God. In the same epistle, Christ's love for the Church is actually expressed thus in terms of a marriage: *husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to consecrate her by cleansing her in the bath of baptism as she utters her confession* (ἐν ῥήματι, Romans x. 8 f., 1 Peter iii. 21), *in order to have the church as his very own, standing before him in all her glory, with never a spot or wrinkle or any such flaw, but consecrated and unblemished* (ἄμωμος). . . . *Christ nourishes and cherishes the church* (Ephesians v. 25–29). This is a moralized or rather a 'mystical' form of the apocalyptic belief about messiah and his bride, which we shall meet in a later section. The eschatological outlook is preserved, as it is in the other passage where, from a different point of view, Christ's love for the Church is also described in terms of marriage. *I betrothed you*, the apostle tells the Corinthian church, *as a chaste maiden to present you to your one husband Christ* (2 Corinthians xi. 2). It is a thoroughly Jewish metaphor, for betrothal had not among the Greeks and Romans the serious character that it had among the Jews. Also, it is eschatological, for the presentation is to take place at the end, which is conceived as a marriage-feast (as in Revelation xix. 7, 8, xxi. 2). This idea of Christ as the Bridegroom is not so prominent in Paul as elsewhere in the NT, but for him the present Church is the Bride (as in Ephesians v. 25–30 and Revelation xxii. 17), and it is particularly to be noted that it is the Church, not the individual Christian soul, to whom Christ is Bridegroom. Paul's point in the former passage was Christ's loving care and purpose for the Church; here it is the other side of the truth, the responsibility of the Church that is urged, viz. that as the destiny of the Church is to be Christ's Bride, she must in the present world, i.e. in the short interval before the marriage, keep her heart undivided in its devotion, instead of yielding to seductive influences like a second Eve.

In the *Assumptio Mosis* (ed. Charles, pp. 46, 92), Joshua wonders how he will be able to safeguard Israel. " How am I to control this people as a father his only son or his comely virgin-daughter who is being prepared to be handed over to the husband she will revere ? "

3

In Ephesians the writer mentions God's love twice, in a similar context, once (*a*) to indicate that life is the end and object of love, and that Christians share the same life as Christ. *Dead in trespasses as we were, God was so rich* (πλούσιος) *in mercy* (ἔλεος) *that for his great love to us he made us live together with Christ . . . to display throughout ages to come his surpassing wealth* (πλοῦτος) *of grace and goodness* (ἐν χρηστότητι) *toward us in Christ Jesus* (ii. 4 f.). Spontaneous and free, with a wealth of full affection, is the redeeming love. This is thoroughly Pauline, though mercy is for the first time associated with love, grace and mercy being the power of God's love in action upon the sins of wayward men. Only God, in his wealth of loving pity, could have brought out man's salvation ; *it is not your doing, but God's gift, not the outcome of what you have done.* So the apostle characteristically beats down any complacency or pride on man's part. Yet, though it is οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων (*not the outcome of deeds on your part*), it is intended to issue in a life of duties and moral interests : *God has made us what we are, creating us in Christ Jesus for the good deeds prepared beforehand by God as our sphere of action.* The obedient, dutiful life is the destiny planned by God's love for men.

(*b*) The second passage connects God's love with predestination. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who . . . chose us in him ere the world was founded,* *to be consecrated* (ἁγίους) *and unblemished* (ἀμώμους) *in his sight, destining* (προορίσας) *us in love* (ἐν ἀγάπῃ) *to be his sons through Jesus Christ.* The reason for blessing God is His love shown in admitting Gentiles to be ἅγιοι, i.e. sons. The argument is that the only ground for the existence of such ἅγιοι is Jesus Christ (ii. 12), apart from whom there is no relation to God. Now, the first ἅγιοι were Jews who were true to the messianic hope fulfilled in Christ (i. 11, 12), but the pre-existent Christ was destined for Gentile believers as well as for Jewish, and this is the marvel which stirs thanksgiving. Nothing but God's sheer love could have inspired such a purpose of election. It is noticeable that in Romans viii. 29 f. God's predestination is also connected with His love, though in another aspect, for here the aim of the apostle is to reassure Christians that they have God's aid and interest through all the hard interval between now and the end. For *he decreed of old* (προώρισε) *that those whom he predestined should share the likeness of his Son—that he might be the firstborn of a great brotherhood. Then he calls those whom he has thus decreed* (προώρισε) *; then he justifies those whom he has called ; then he glorifies those whom he has justified.* Those who now find themselves in the current of this saving purpose may be sure that the divine love which they at present experience (35, 39) will bear them into their desired haven through all the storms and cross-currents of the final hour of the world ; such is the apostle's assurance. In the Ephesians-passage, on the other hand, the object is to show that the divine love lies at the back of this saving choice and call.

As has been indicated, ἐν ἀγάπῃ goes with the following προορίσας, referring to the divine love ; the argument of the whole passage is that God has chosen Christians, irrespective of their national origin, for the life of ἅγιοι, i.e. of immediate relationship to Himself, which is further defined as sonship ; that this destiny is the outcome of His eternal will, and not a sudden afterthought, and that it is to be realized through Jesus Christ. What God is thus to us is 'love'; His will is a will of love. And as men are sinful, this love is at once spoken of in terms of grace or forgiveness (6, 7). The less probable interpretation takes ἐν ἀγάπῃ with what precedes, as though it were the form and expression of the Christian spirit; *God hath chosen us in him* (i.e. Christ) *before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.*

All such references to election had a timely meaning. For the Gentile Christians were constantly taunted by Jewish Christians as well as by Jews: 'What right have you to God's love? You have no place in His purpose of grace.'

4

It was a general axiom for the apostle and his fellows that to be God's People was to be loved by Him (Romans ix. 25). This did not require proof. And as the Church was now the People of God, the ancient term of honour and favour was taken over freely; the phrase about being *beloved by God* or *by the Lord*, which in the LXX was a familiar word for Israel or for heroes of Israel like Abraham, Moses, and Samuel, became a title for Christian believers. *Brothers beloved by God* is Paul's phrase for the Church at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians i. 4); he addresses the Christians at Rome as *all in Rome who are beloved by God* (Romans i. 7), and appeals to the church at Colossae as *God's chosen, as consecrated and beloved* (Colossians iii. 12).

The last-named passage suggests the first of two common features in the allusions to the love of the Lord for men, viz. (*a*) the construction of this with election. Besides the connexion with divine predestination (see above), there are several references like *O brothers beloved by God, we know he has chosen you* (1 Thessalonians i. 4), and *We are bound always to thank God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God* *has chosen you* (2 Thessalonians ii. 13). This election or selection enters human life through the divine call; *God has chosen you . . . he called you by our gospel* (2 Thessalonians iii. 13, 14). The combination of election and love was not new, of course (see, e.g., the LXX of Isaiah xli. 8, 9), but Paul's reason for emphasizing it was in order to bring out his cardinal conviction that God's loving grace lay at the back of everything in religion, and also to found Christian assurance on a stable basis (see above). So far was it from leaving no place for moral initiative and responsibility, however, that it is linked to a high sense of obligation, which forms (*b*) the second feature of the divine love. The apostle, as indeed we have already seen, more than once marks explicitly that the experience of God's free love carries with it a moral obligation, as e.g. in Romans i. 7 (*to all who are beloved by God, called to be saints*)—where saints (ἁγίοις) covers more than mere privilege, and at more length in Colossians iii. 12–14: *as God's own chosen* (ἐκλεκτοί), *as consecrated* (ἅγιοι) *and beloved, be clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and good temper—forbear and forgive each other in any case of complaint; as Christ forgave you, so must you forgive. And above all you must be loving.* It is not implied, of course, that these qualities do not enter into love, but that love includes them and more; they are manifestations of a 'love' which is even more comprehensive. The passage is introduced by an argument which has two special features of interest (5–11), for (i) in summoning Christians to discard the profane vices of paganism, notably immorality and malicious anger, which are incompatible with ἅγιοι, Paul bids them *put on the new nature, which is renewed in the likeness of its Creator*, and explains (ii) the purpose of this renewal, viz. *for the knowledge of him.* The former (cf. Romans viii. 29) is one of the rare NT allusions to the current ethical motive of loyalty to God's likeness (referring to the Genesis-story of creation); for this see below. The reason for the latter emphasis on 'knowledge' is not clear, but it may echo the semi-mystical notion of 'knowledge' which is elsewhere noted, though the apostle instantly proceeds to mention the precise content of the 'knowledge' which he has in mind,[1] namely (ver. 11), that all national and racial distinctions disappear in the fellowship of Christ; whoever knows the truth about God and about man as God created and re-created him, knows that in a gathering of renewed men, of whatever race or culture, all you see is Christ and you see Christ in them all. It is in the wake of these considerations about God's character and purpose that Paul goes on to his word about the new nature of love, which answers to the divine. Those whom God loves and has renewed in His own likeness must resemble Him.

This reproduction of the divine love by Christians in mutual relationships which involved forbearance, and in the responsibility of living up to their high calling—for both motives are included—is the theme of Ephesians iv. 32 f.: *be generous to each other as God has been generous to you in Christ. Copy God, then, as his beloved children, and lead lives of love, just as Christ loved you and gave himself up for you to be a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Never let any sexual vice or impurity or lust be so much as mentioned by you—that is the proper course for saints to take*, etc. The divine forgiveness is the supreme motive and example of the forgiving temper, and the imitation of God in this phase of human intercourse is spoken of as a copying of Jesus Christ quite freely. Furthermore, the thought of the position won for Christians by the sacrifice of Christ is made the source of still wider obligation; those thus redeemed, at so great a cost, must not hold themselves cheap or allow their life to be contaminated by the pagan world. The divine love is thus presented as the incentive to a forgiving spirit inside the Community and also to a careful life in the outside world. It is noticeable that for once Paul does not call his readers 'his' beloved children but 'God's'; perhaps it was because those to whom this letter was addressed were not a Church founded by himself, but the deeper reason is that he desired to stress God's love for them as the source of the good life.

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[1] In Ephesians iv. 13 f. the aim of God in the Christian ministry is the maturity of the Church—*till we all attain the unity of the faith and of the knowledge* (ἐπιγνώσεως) *of God's Son.*

A unique allusion occurs in Ephesians iv. 30, which refers to the indwelling Spirit of God in the Church as wounded by misconduct on the part of members: *Grieve* (vex) *not the holy Spirit of God.* This follows a warning against *bad words* and precedes the injunction to *drop all bitter feeling and passion and anger and clamouring and insults, together with all malice.* It is not certain whether it is to be connected specially with the one or the other. But the vital point is that the conception of the divine Spirit being hurt by unchristian behaviour in the Church implies the loving nature of the Spirit. *Holy* is definitely used to mark the ethical quality of the Spirit. The apostle seems to imply that bad, bitter words or angry feelings are not vented in the air, and that they hurt more than one's fellow-members. The Spirit which inspires love is wounded by whatever is loveless in the fellowship. Paul here as elsewhere never speaks of the Spirit except through his experience of Christ and in relation to the Church, any more than he does of God as Father.

5

In line with this, it must be observed that the experience of God's gracious love equips life for the tasks of its vocation. Paul mentions two points at which the sense of God's love provides the Christian with vital motives in especial. (i) One is, for stedfast courage. This is prominent in 2 Thessalonians, where two prayers for the Church breathe the thought of loyal endurance: *may our Lord Jesus Christ himself* (αὐτὸς δέ) *and God our Father who has loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope, graciously encourage your hearts and* *strengthen them for all good in deed and word* (ii. 16, 17); and again (in iii. 5), *may the Lord direct your hearts towards God's love* (i.e. to His loyal care for the interests of His people in a time of strain, as in ver. 3) *and towards Christ's patience* (i.e. the ὑπομονή which He inspires and requires). The divine love opens up a hope which is good and genuine, inspiring the faithful with a courageous confidence; such is the thought of these words. They have a glow in them which proves that the patience and courage of Christians are no mere acquiescence in the will of God or a stoical endurance of hardship. The glow becomes still clearer in a passage like Romans v. 1–5 or viii. 35–39. Personal loyalty and goodness are required, if such a glow is to be maintained; Paul is careful to mark that, as in the first of the two passages from Thessalonians. If the αὐτὸς δέ be taken as a slight contrast to what precedes, the point of the counsel would be specially fine—as though Paul argued,[1] "We have commanded you to stand firm and hold to the instructions which you have received, and we have based our imperative on the fact that you are beloved and elect; but after all (δέ), the only power that can make the appeal effective, that can encourage your purposes and strengthen them in the sphere of righteousness, is Christ and God."

(ii) The second motive is for unity; this love lays on Christians the obligation of mutual harmony. There is significance in the fact that the stormy second epistle to the Corinthians closes with the prayer, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with you all* (xiii. 14). Here God's love is mediated by the historical death of Christ as an act of grace, and realized in experience (as in Romans v. 8) by the action of the Spirit; but ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος includes not only the thought of sharing in the Spirit's endowments, but the thought of the mutual fellowship which the Spirit inspires in the Body. The same Greek phrase (*κοινωνία πνεύματος*) is used in urging unity of feeling, since the spirit in which Christians participate is opposed to all dissension; this is in the only other passage where it occurs (Philippians ii. 1–4), and substantially the same sense underlies both passages. The apostle had just urged the other side of the truth, in counselling these fractious Christians to *live in harmony, keep the peace; then the God of love and peace will be with you* (2 Corinthians xiii. 11). God is a God of love and peace; there is no room for His presence in a Church given over to wrangling and dissension.

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[1] So J. E. Frame, *ad loc.* in "Thessalonians" (*International Critical Commentary*).

To live in harmony here as in Philippians ii. 2 is opposed to the quarrelsome temper. A neat example of the Greek phrase has been lately discovered in Menander's *Epitrepontes* (862, 863): *καγώ σε ταὔτ’ ἐμοὶ φρονεῖν ἀναγκάσω καὶ μὴ στασιάζειν* (i.e. not to disagree or quarrel with).

6

In conclusion, three points fall to be noted.

(i) The range of the divine love is universal; God is willing to be the Father of all and any, no matter what their national or racial heritage may have been; as Jewish birth does not qualify by itself, so neither does pagan birth disqualify; the love of God is open to the human race; *One died for all . . . in Christ God reconciled the world to himself*, etc. A later Paulinist stated this explicitly, in view of some contemporary gnostic tendency to make God's love exclusive (Titus ii. 4), but it lies implicit in the whole religious interpretation of the apostle himself.

(ii) Christ's love for man is God's will for man; the Father and the Son are at one in this purpose and action of love. This is equally axiomatic; so much so that he can say, *May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who has loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope,* etc. (2 Thessalonians ii. 16). He can speak freely of God's love and Christ's together, as in Ephesians v. 1, 2, and most notably in Romans viii. 35–39: *Who can ever part us from* (τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ χριστοῦ) *Christ's love? . . . I am certain that nothing will be able to part us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.* He had already said that amid all the shocks and sufferings of life *we are more than conquerors through him who loved us* (ver. 37), meaning that, so far from such trials severing us from the Lord's love, they increase our consciousness of its meaning and reality, as it proves itself able to bear us safely through the breakers to the shore; loyal Christians not only get through the rough time but get more of God's love as they hold out. These words ought to have warned readers against imagining that ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ χριστοῦ (θεοῦ) here or in Romans v. 4, 2 Corinthians v. 14, etc., meant our love for Christ; it is the Lord's devotion to man, not man's to the Lord, which is the pivot in Paul's statement of Christianity. The hymn of Ambrose rings true to this conception, though the metaphor is different:

> Devota sanctorum fides,
> Invicta spes credentium,
> Perfecta Christi caritas
> Mundi triumphat principem.

(iii) There also emerges the conception of the Father's love for the Son, which is developed in the later Johannine theology, and which, as we have found (see p. 76), is already part of the primitive tradition about Jesus. For ἀγαπητός in its special sense of 'unique' or 'only' he preferred to use ἴδιος, as applied to the divine Son; in the sense of 'beloved' he confined it to fellow-Christians, and chose equivalents when he desired to speak of God's love for Jesus Christ. Thus he speaks of *the Father rescuing us from the power of the Darkness and transferring us to the realm of his beloved* (τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ) *Son* (Colossians i. 13), where the Greek means not the Son whom the Father's love for us provides, but the Son who as 'beloved' is more than any angelic 'son of God,' such as the errorists at Colossae evidently held up for worship and trust in the work of redemption. Christ as the loved Son is the Father's one, authentic representative in this labour of love for men; this is the implication of the phrase, and it tallies with the belief underlying the synoptic use of 'Beloved' in this connexion, although of course for the apostle it is the risen Lord of whom he thinks. In Ephesians i. 6, where the thought is echoed, the word used is the past participle of the verb, as he speaks of *God's glorious grace bestowed on us in the Beloved* (ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ), meaning the absolute Son of God, the supreme object of the Father's love as He mediates that love for men.

The avoidance of a term like μονογενής for Jesus Christ in this connexion is perhaps significant, in view of the later usage of such terms. Thus we find that Clement of Rome uses μονογενές only of the "unique" phoenix (xxv. 2), and like *Barnabas* (iii. 6) uses ἠγαπημένος (lix. 2, 3) of Christ, not ἀγαπητός, which like Paul he reserves exclusively for Christians. The same is true of Ignatius. For all his passionate devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, he never calls him even 'beloved' (ἠγαπημένος), keeping that term as well as ἀγαπητός for fellow-Christians, either the Church or individuals; once indeed he has occasion to speak of Christ as the only Son of God (*Rom.* inscr.), but he uses μόνος, as Justin does in *Apol.* i. 23 (μόνος ἰδίως υἱός), not μονογενής. In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (xx. 2) μονογενής is once applied to Jesus Christ, but ἀγαπητός is also used, obviously in the sense of 'beloved' (xiv. 1, 3), as by the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* (viii. 11), who uses μονογενής (x. 2) elsewhere of the Son.

II

1

THE allusions to love for God or Christ seem at first sight to be rather scanty and even incidental.

Three occur in First Corinthians. (*a*) There is the passage about the higher wisdom or philosophy of the gospel in ii. 9: *what no eye has ever seen, what no ear has ever heard, what never entered the mind of man, God has prepared all that for those who love him* (τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν). The apostle has in mind some passage like Isaiah lxiv. 4, but there in the LXX the last words are, "those who await his mercy" (τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν ἔλεον). It is significant that he alters the phrase. He has been speaking, in terms familiar to the current religious Hellenism, of the deeper mysteries of the gospel being reserved for the mature or the initiated; *we do discuss 'wisdom' with those who are mature* (τέλειοι), for *God has revealed it to us by the Spirit.* But this maturity involves love for God; it is not acuteness of intelligence by itself. In the language of the contemporary mystery-cults the τέλειοι were men and women capable of understanding (νοεῖν) the full 'knowledge' (γνῶσις), but Paul is by himself when he stresses love to God as the faculty for understanding any divine mysteries of religion such as the meaning of the Cross in the cosmic conflict. One reason for the change of wording may be that the apostle regards the fulfilment of the promise as not purely eschatological. The rabbis apparently interpreted the Isaianic passage as an allusion to messianic bliss in the next world; whereas Paul triumphantly suggests that there is already some fulfilment in the present experience of the Christian Church as it loves the Lord. The turn of expression would then correspond to what occurs often elsewhere in the Pauline interpretation, an emphasis on the truth that the future has already begun to be, and that experience is ours no less than expectation. No doubt, in applying to Christians the phrase *loving God*, a phrase common in the OT and the later Judaism as a title of the People Israel, the apostle is also widening the range of the People beyond the national bounds of Israel, just as in Romans viii. 28, where *those who love God* is at once followed by the words *those who have been called in terms of his purpose*—the world-wide purpose of the gospel. But here this universal outlook is probably secondary to the other interest, viz. that of marking the due condition for receiving revelations of divine truth.

The instinctive preference of the early Christians for such a phrase may be illustrated from James i. 12, where *the crown of life which is promised to all who love him* is a reminiscence of a similar OT prophecy (Zechariah vi. 14) in which the promise is to *τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν*. In the *Epistle to Diognetus* (x. 2) it is said, *God loved mankind to whom he sent his only begotten Son and to whom he promised the realm in heaven, which he will give to those who have loved him.* In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (ii. 3), indeed, the original word is retained, but this is on account of the context; the martyrs in their horrid tortures "looked up to the good things preserved for those who have endured (*ὑπομείνασιν*), things that ear never heard nor eye beheld," etc.

The allusion in Romans viii. 28 is the nearest in Paul to the thought underneath the appeal of Clement of Rome (xxix. 1), to *love our gracious and kind-hearted Father, who has made us part of His own choice* among men. "The godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons . . . because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God." This allusion in the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church (xvii.), with the reference to the Lord's Supper as " a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves " (xxviii.), is the sole mention of love in the Articles ; there is not a word about God's love for men.

(*b*) This thought recurs in viii. 3, though in a slightly different connexion. The liberal or enlightened party in the Corinthian church, who were plainly in the majority, knew their religion ; as instructed Christians they were well aware that there was no such thing as an idol, and that therefore any silly scruples felt about eating meat which might have been in touch with pagan-worship were unworthy of regard. Paul agreed with them, but disliked their proud spirit and lack of consideration for weaker members of the Church. Of course, he remarks ironically, quoting the catchword of the party, 'We all possess knowledge'! But, he adds, pretentious knowledge and ostentatious self-conceit do not 'edify' the Church, and such intellectual pride is not the true knowledge of God. *Knowledge puffs up, love builds up.* To 'edify' or build up is not, as moderns are apt to take it, a pious stirring of emotions ; it was a synonym for the mutual encouragement and upbuilding that every Christian received from his fellowship with others in the Church, and consideration or kindly love was the powerful means of thus strengthening weak and unstable character. *Love* here is naturally the common love of Christians for one another. But when the apostle proceeds to rebuke the conceit of the liberals, which not only fails to help the community but fails to bring the thinker himself into real knowledge of God, he puts it thus : *Whoever imagines that he has attained to some degree of knowledge, does not possess the true knowledge yet ; but if anyone loves God, he is known by him.* Observe the close connexion between love to God and love to man, and especially the sudden turn of expression—*he is 'known' by him*, not, as we might have expected, *he knows God*. This is not unexampled in Paul ; he employs the same sort of change in Galatians iv. 9 (*now that you know God, or* *rather are known by God*), with an instinctive sense of reverence, as though to lay stress upon God rather than upon man taking the initiative in religion, and also in order to rule out the idea that one owes everything to a kind of clever insight into the mysteries of the faith instead of to divine choice and revelation. *If anyone loves God, he is known by him* is a correction of the notion that the knowledge of God lay at the end of acute speculation on the part of the enlightened party at Corinth; for the term *know* is employed in its Semitic sense, by which the verb meant 'to take an affectionate personal interest in' anyone. This is what is denoted by God 'knowing' Israel (as in Amos iii. 2: *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities;* Jeremiah i.5: *Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you*, etc.); to *know* is to choose, to enter into personal relationships with anyone, involving goodwill, sympathy, and understanding. A similar usage prevailed in the mysticism of the cults throughout the Hellenistic world. None of Paul's readers could mistake his meaning here, viz. that 'knowledge' implied a spiritual relationship between the unseen God and the human soul, which is conditioned by love.[1]

(*c*) The third allusion comes at the close of the epistle, where the apostle takes the pen himself to send a special, personal word (xvi. 21 f.): *I Paul write this salutation with my own hand: 'If anyone has no love for* (οὐ φιλεῖ) *the Lord, God's curse be on him* (ἀνάθεμα) *!'*—a passionate outburst. Here φιλεῖν is used (as in Matthew x. 37) in the same sense as ἀγαπᾶν, for it is unlikely that the apostle deliberately employed an inferior term, as though οὐ φιλεῖ meant 'has not even affection for.' The force of the negative indeed might be expressed by 'has no heart for,' 'is indifferent to.' Ἀνάθεμα recurs on the opposite side of the same intense passion for Christ, in the outburst of Romans ix. 3: *I could have wished*

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[1] *Who shall understand*, says the author of *Barnabas* (vi. 10), *save he who is wise and learned and a lover of his Lord?*

myself accursed (ἀνάθεμα) *and banished from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my natural kinsmen.* As for *Maranatha*, which immediately follows, if we press the connexion with the foregoing outburst, there would be a partial parallel in 2 Timothy iv. 8 : *all who have loved and longed for* (ἠγαπηκόσιν) *his appearance*, since *Maranatha* means either 'Lord, come!' or 'The Lord is coming.' The thought then would be, that the man who had no love for the Lord showed it by indifference to his second Advent.[1] But in the Corinthian text this is no more than in the background; the primary thought is that of devotion to the Lord as the mark of the true Christian, who remains loyal to Christ amid the temptations of pagan life. Only, loyalty has here the warm note of personal gratitude, which one hears later in the mediaeval hymns, e.g. in Bonaventura's lines:

> Non sum tanti, Jesu, quanti
> Amor tuus aestimat;
> Heu, cur ego vitam dego
> Si cor te non redamat?

2

In Ephesians vi. 24 the concluding prayer is: *grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.* Such seems to be the meaning of ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ, a love or devotion that will not dry up in indifference. It might be opposed to counterfeit or insincere love, but probably it is in contrast to a love that does not last. This implies that the closing words of the sentence, ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ, go with πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, and not with ἡ χάρις (in the sense of *eternal grace*). The underlying thought is that of 1 Peter i. 23 f. (see below), though the reference there is to brotherly love. Love for the Lord Jesus Christ must be no love that gives way or grows cold; real devotion for him neither fades nor fails but is *ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ*, the sphere that lies beyond decay and death.

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[1] It might also be a warning (as in James v. 9): the Lord is coming, to requite disloyalty among his followers. But I see no reason to discover, with E. Peterson (*Heis Theos*, pp. 130, 131), the echo of a liturgical formula in 1 Corinthians xvi. 22 ('away with him').

Again, as in the previous section, no distinction is drawn between God and Christ. Love is directed to each, the same love. This is where the extension of the term from the ancient and current use of it in Judaism becomes visible, and with the extension goes a warmer note of personal religion, which is heard also in the hearty assurance that *those who love God, those who have been called in terms of his purpose* (i.e. Jews and Gentiles alike), *have his aid and interest in everything* (Romans viii. 28). This denotes not a specially spiritual party in the Church, but the whole Church, described as loving God or devoted to Him; their devotion to Him is bound up with His devotion to them, as the apostle proceeds to show.

The specific character of the phrase in Christendom is best seen against its older background. A characteristic expression of what 'loving God' meant as a term for true worshippers is furnished, for example, by *Sirach* ii. 15, 16:

Those who revere the Lord will not disobey his words,
and those who love him will keep his ways;
those who revere the Lord will seek his favour,
and those who love him shall be saturated with his law.

Here love (ἀγαπῶντες) and reverence (φοβούμενοι) are two terms for the same attitude of reverent obedience to the Law of the Lord. Indeed it is expressly stated that the lovers of the Lord are Israelites and Israelites only, since to them alone has the Lord given the full measure of His wisdom (i. 9, 10):

The Lord poured out wisdom on all his works,
granting her to all flesh;
but he lavished her freely on those who love him,

i.e. on Israel, who receive the gift without restriction. The love of the Lord and the fear of the Lord are thus synonymous terms for strict, dutiful obedience to the principles of true religion, the latter stressing the deep awe which evoked loyalty. It is significant that this was the moral context of the phrase about 'loving the Lord,' when Christianity arose. The change that took place was that the Church instinctively appropriated the term for a wider fellowship than Israel; the sense of obedience remained, and also the profound sense of reverent awe, for Paul and others can freely speak of 'the fear of God' in the right sense of the term, and there is no real instance of any problem started in the New Testament literature by a contrast between fear and love; finally, the warm personal religion of the Church led to a preference for 'loving God' as a more adequate term than 'fearing the Lord,' a phrase only once used by Paul, and then of slaves (Colossians iii. 22). All this comes out in the literature of the primitive Church (see below) and in the Johannine theology, but it is already adumbrated in Paul's teaching.

3

Such are the five specific references to Christians' love for God or Christ. As against their paucity, it may be fairly urged that the epistles break out repeatedly into a rhythm of thankfulness and praise for God's unfailing goodness, which, though not verbally connected with love, expresses the adoring gratitude and joy of the redeemed. Furthermore, while they are few, they are not insignificant; *those who love God* was plainly a current title of Christians, and it was not formal. "Pietatis summam sub dilectione Dei complexus est" is Calvin's remark on Romans viii. 28; in no conventional sense love for God did sum up practical religion, and the apostle's allusions are neither casual nor secondary. Nevertheless we ask, why does Paul, like Jesus, generally prefer trust or faith to love, in expressing the relation of the soul to God?

Doubtless, we possess no records of his private devotions. But the epistles do yield specimens of the way in which the apostle prayed and praised; they are a guide to the sort of language which instinctively came to his lips, and it is never the language of endearment. *The life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me*—not, whom I love. Christ is not, for Paul, "my Beloved." It was not that he lacked a passionate devotion to his Master. But, in spite of all the sacred association of the Shema, in which he had been trained, he generally chose to say, "I am his δοῦλος, his devoted servant." No one valued more highly than he did the freedom of sonship which faith brought, the sense of being within the household of God the Father. But still he said, δοῦλος. He never called Jesus even his Elder Brother; once he described him indeed as *the first-born among many brothers* (Romans viii. 29), but this was from the standpoint of the divine purpose. Jesus drew out his love in trust and service and obedience. *Christ Jesus my Lord* (Philippians iii. 8) corresponded to *Paul the servant* (δοῦλος); God is the *God whose I am and whom I serve* (Acts xxvii. 23). It is significant that the term *beloved* is used by Paul about his fellow-Christians, not about Christ—a usage generally reversed in the religious world of to-day! While Jesus Christ inspired primitive Christians with far more than mere awe or reverence, at the same time their love and devotion were charged with a sense of him as their lord (κύριος), which imposed an instinctive check upon the use of ordinary love-language. The very depth of their devotion appears to have made them generally reticent about employing such terms. Paul had realized what Jesus meant by his stress on "doing the will of the Father," not on saying effusively, "Lord, Lord." He could suffer and did suffer for his Lord; he spent himself gladly for his sake. And it was this, rather than any love-language, which formed the channel for expressing his utter devotion to Christ.

From a study of Paul's letters we may infer that love to God then, as now, was apt to degenerate into a sentimental pietism which did justice neither to intelligence nor to duty. In the very cults where personal religion was being fostered, lay germs of a false emotionalism. There may be a love to God or Christ, Paul felt, which is not adequate to the purpose and genius of Christianity. "It is not enough to love Christ in any way; we must love him precisely as the representative and embodiment of the cause for which he lived and died, the cause of the Gospel, of the Kingdom of God. . . . The question is therefore not only: 'Do I love Christ?' but also, 'Why do I love him? under what aspect?'"[1] Hence in Paul the constant preference of faith to love, as he is describing the relation of the soul to the Lord, throws light upon the meaning of 'love,' even when this latter term is employed. For love to the Lord is not the indulgence of facile emotion, but a serious and searching experience, which amounts often to loyalty under the strain of life. When Paul spoke of loving God he had in his mind the proof of this by rejoicing in His will for us, by trusting Him bravely, in spite of appearances, and by hearty service that grudged nothing in His cause. Such actions of the soul were better expressed by faith than by love, if only for this reason that faith denoted a moral submission which might be missed in love. 'Love to Christ' is an indefinite expression, whereas faith in him denotes the confession of him as Lord, and excludes anything like the notion that there can be an exchange of affection upon equal terms; to 'believe in him' or to 'trust him' is a mode of speech which preserves better the vital elements of adoration and humility that belong to the profound sense of indebtedness to the Lord.[2] It is true that when Paul uses characteristically the language of 'faith,' he does not imply that love to God is a sort of supplement to trust and belief, as though the initial faith of certainty had to flower out into a heart-affection, in order to complete the Christian experience; what he meant by love to the Lord was organic to faith. But it is fair to argue that he employs the language of faith by deliberate choice, since it was free from the presumptuous idea of love-play on an equal footing with the Beloved.

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[1] George Tyrrell, *Lex Credendi*, pp. 23–25.

[2] See Ritschl's *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, ii. 99–101, and the discussion of this point in Herrmann's *Communion with God* (Eng. trans., 1906, 272–289).

III

WE pass now to consider how Paul showed love to God manifesting itself in love to fellow-Christians, as Jesus had already done. This aspect appears in rich variety throughout all the extant epistles. Love is as comprehensive for him in this light as it was for Jesus, summing up the moral responsibilities of Christians. It is too obvious to require a catalogue of its expressions, but the following are among the most characteristic.

I

Twice φιλαδελφία is employed. The term had been familiar to Greeks as an expression for affection between brothers in blood or for sympathy between those knit by some common tie of descent and kindred, and the Jews had used it for the common loyalty and kindness which was expected to prevail between fellow-Jews. Then it was taken over by the early Church for the mutual affection between those who, drawn from any race, believed in the one Lord.

Some Christians were naturally affectionate and warm-hearted. Paul is able to say once (1 Thessalonians iv. 9, 10): *You need no one to write you upon brotherly love, for you are yourselves taught by God to love one another, as indeed is your practice towards all the brothers throughout all Macedonia.* As is evident from another letter to a Macedonian church (Philippians i. 9 f.), there was a racial instinct in the Macedonian nature which, as we say, made Christian love come easy to them. Their disposition pointed that way, and the apostle almost apologizes for saying anything to them about this quality. Only, it did not invariably carry with it moral purity (ver. 3–8), nor did it lead in every case to dutifulness and the spirit of work (ver. 11, 12). The warm heart is not always the clean heart, and it may not produce activity. On the duty of a pure life and on the perils of idleness the apostle had something to say to those good-natured, affectionate Macedonians, in order to make their Christian love complete.

The other passage is in Romans xii. 10: *put affection into your love for the brotherhood*, as we may render the Greek *τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ . . . φιλόστοργοι*. As we have already seen, this is a warning against formality. At Rome there seems to have been more danger of the family atmosphere of God's Household becoming formal than among the warm-hearted population of the province of Macedonia.

There is a good discussion of what the Stoics meant by φιλαδελφια in Epictetus iii. 24. He is mainly concerned to show that the cosmopolitan virtue of affection does not impair the independence of the soul, but incidentally he notes the religious basis, in a curious eulogy of Diogenes. "How did Diogenes love mankind? As God's servant ought to do, caring kindly for them, and at the same time being subject to God."

The general term, however, is *ἀγάπη* or *ἀγαπάω*. It is rare to find *φιλέω* employed, as it is in Titus iii. 15: *Salute those who love* (*φιλοῦντας*) *us in the faith*. The collocation of love and faith here recalls the closing prayer in Ephesians vi. 23: *Peace and love with faith* (the brotherly love that accompanies true faith) *be to the brothers from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. This is the only allusion to 'brothers' in that epistle, and it shows how the full bliss or peace of the Christian life, the inward unity with God which creates harmony within the brotherhood, is associated with the mutual love which is rooted in faith. The words imply not so much that faith is required in order that peace and love may be genuine, as that such community-love is the mark and evidence of faith, requiring faith as its vital source. Furthermore, such brotherly love is inspired by God. Commonly this truth is expressed by the apostle in terms of the Spirit (see below), but otherwise the close connexion of mutual love with God and specially with God's love is most strongly marked in Ephesians, although it is implied in 1 Thessalonians iii. 12, 13, and in Colossians iii. 12 f. (see below). In Ephesians iv. 31, 32, for example, the warning against bitter feeling and bad temper in the community is clinched by the appeal (v. 1, 2): *copy God,*[1] *then, as his beloved children, and lead lives of love, just as Christ loved you and gave himself up for you* in a self-sacrifice which is the standard and inspiration of Christian love. So in v. 25–28: *husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.* It is almost (see above, p. 40) the only passage in the NT where love (ἀγαπάω) is employed in its sexual or human sense, but the appeal for consideration and devotion in this particular line of ethical discipline is reinforced by the thought of the divine love.

The general thought, however, is to be found in the earlier epistles. It lies underneath the argument of 2 Corinthians v. 13 f., where *the love of Christ* is the love shown by *One who has died for all in order to have the living live no longer for themselves but for him who died and rose for them.* The outcome of Christ's redeeming love is that Christians refer everything to him as their Lord, their whole life being directed to him. As usual, wherever Paul alludes to the character of the Lord Jesus (e.g. in Romans xv. 3 f., 1 Corinthians x. 24, xi. 1, and Philippians ii. 5 f.), it is to his self-sacrifice and unselfishness. Self-renouncing love was the outstanding feature, for him, of the character of Jesus Christ, which he knew so well, and he insists that this spirit must be in Christians, as the fruit and effect of his Spirit. When he summons his churches to consider the character and to imitate the spirit of the Lord, it is invariably on the question of humble unselfishness. Yet this ethical demand is characteristically put in another way. For while the apostle has his own version of the Golden Rule, he usually regards the obligation of brotherly love as response to the Spirit rather than as imitation of Jesus or as obedience to a command of Jesus.

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[1] See the fine paper on "The Imitation of God" by Dr. Abrahams in his *Studies in Pharisaism* (ii. 138 f.).

2

The equivalent for the Golden Rule is twice mentioned. In Galatians v. 14 the antithesis to the Law is more marked than in Romans xiii. 8–10. In the former passage (*the entire Law is summed up in one word, in 'You must love your neighbour as yourself'*) he is arguing that freedom from the Law does not mean moral indifference or laxity; his gospel does not imply that the individual is left free to follow his own impulses as the sole guide to ethical conduct. The essence and authority of the divine Law, taken as a whole, lies in love, and that is binding.[1] In the other passage he is insisting that love among Christians carries its own ethic with it, and requires no supplementing from the Jewish Torah or any other code. *Owe no man anything save to love one another* (Romans xiii. 8) —the outstanding debt of love which he recognizes in a special form in his own apostolic ministry (Romans i. 8). Love keeps men from those breaches of the social order (dishonesty, fraud, disrespectful behaviour, getting into debt, evading taxes, etc.) which are prohibited by the Law of Judaism as well as by the civil code of the Empire; it is a moral inspiration and an instinctive principle of conduct. *He who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law.* In fact, the commands of the decalogue *are summed up in a single*

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[1] The new division of the letter which begins at v. 13 handles a fresh aspect of freedom; hitherto Paul has been defending it against a legalistic view of religion, but now he turns to distinguish it from moral licence or lawlessness. In both arguments, he uses the truth of the Spirit.

word, 'You must love your neighbour as yourself.' Love never wrongs a neighbour; that is why love is the fulfilment of the law. All this is in line with the teaching of Jesus; but in both passages Paul simply quotes *love your neighbour*, as sufficient for his immediate purpose, without adding *love the Lord your God.* Another omission is that he does not mention *love your enemies*; the truth of this he puts otherwise. The more passive side of the Golden Rule is to be traced behind the advice to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians vi. 7, 8) not to indulge in litigation over private disputes before pagan tribunals, but rather to bear injuries and endure injustice; better suffer wrong than do wrong; better settle your own quarrels, better still avoid quarrels altogether, for they betray a lack of brotherly love.

3

It is, however, in connexion with the Spirit that the apostle chiefly urges Christian love. *The fruit* or harvest *of the Spirit* in the community *is love* (Galatians v. 22). *By every incentive of love* is an appeal clinched at once, as its immediate sequel, by the appeal, *by all your participation in the Spirit* (Philippians ii. 1). Again, *Epaphras has informed us of your love in the Spirit* (Colossians i. 8). *Unaffected* or unfeigned *love* follows *the holy Spirit* in 2 Corinthians vi. 6, as one of the signs of the apostle's genuine zeal. In Romans xv. 30 (*Brothers, I beg of you, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love that the Spirit inspires, rally round me by praying to God for me*) he implies that the mutual love of Christians should move them to intercessory prayer, since it is inspired by the Spirit in the Church; love will instinctively pray for others, as part of its duty to them. Such passages show that this teaching on mutual love forms part of the apostle's re-statement of the idea of the Spirit, which plays so marked a rôle in his theology. For him the Spirit is no longer a sudden force or impulse that comes and goes, it is not merely a special endowment for special service, or an ecstatic rapture of abnormal origin, but the power of the indwelling Lord in the sphere of the Community. Love, therefore, is presented and urged no longer in terms of obedience to some external code, but as the vital response to this Spirit of the Lord as an inward power acting through the whole moral life of the society, overcoming dislike and prejudice and friction, checking any tendency to self-seeking, settling differences, allaying party-spirit, and combining members in a common service. The value of this teaching needs no certificate. People sometimes seem to be never so irreligious as in a religious community, where antipathies stirred by differences of education or social position or temperamental idiosyncrasies rouse bad feeling; such misunderstandings and quarrels are liable to occur even as men and women are brought together for the highest of all ends. It was one of the services rendered by the apostle that he taught his churches to recognize in the Spirit a power which was designed to raise them above such clashing and misconception and to foster a loyalty which safeguarded the inward peace and harmony of the societies.

The consciousness that we are receiving as well as achieving is not confined to the initial crisis of the Christian experience. This is the truth underlying the Pauline conception of the Spirit in the Church. Throughout the discipline of life Christians are aided and inspired by the Lord who opened that new life to them. Jesus had taught that sonship was not a corollary to creation, but a relationship which in a sense had to be morally achieved in his fellowship; Paul carries on this religious truth by connecting the moral endeavours of the Church with the indwelling Spirit of the Lord. This Spirit, as the divine life-principle which renews human nature, effects so radical a change that Paul, from one point of view, regards the moral demands of the Christian life as the outcome of this power manifesting itself in believers.

He can even speak, in a splendid paradox, of *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, and of the Christian graces or habits of life as a harvest ripened by the Spirit on the good soil of redeemed humanity. *The harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, good temper* (μακροθυμία), *kindliness* (χρηστότης), *generosity* (ἀγαθωσύνη), *fidelity* (πίστις), *gentleness* (πρᾳότης), *self-control* (Galatians v. 22, 23). As the Spirit proceeds from God and works to effect a transformation of human nature into the likeness of the divine, love is naturally put first in the list; it may be that Paul intends to represent it as the source of all the high qualities that follow, but at anyrate it is the primary manifestation of the divine Spirit in those who make up the community, as against ugly breaches of brotherly love and moral purity in the unregenerate nature.

In the text of Galatians v. 13 an interesting variant soon appeared. For *serve one another in love* (διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης), τῇ ἀγάπῃ τοῦ πνεύματος was read in the Old Latin version, in D G, in the Gothic version, and by some early fathers, i.e. *serve one another in love inspired by the Spirit.* The gloss, which may have been borrowed from Romans xv. 30, does represent a true idea of what love meant for the apostle as an inspiration to devoted concern for the welfare of others in the household of the faith.

4

"Nothing is so natural to the mystic as in rich single words, such as 'faith,' 'light,' 'love,' to sum up and take for granted, without specially enumerating them, all good moral principles and habits." So Matthew Arnold observes, in speaking of St. Paul. Yet, he adds, in a passage like Galatians v. 22 f. how the apostle goes into detail about the moral habits to be practised by the Christian! This rich harvest of the Spirit begins with love and includes πίστις, which here means 'fidelity' (as in Titus ii. 10), not ‘faith’ or ‘belief.’ Nevertheless, although Paul has in mind here the human quality of loyalty or trustworthiness, there is nothing more common in his letters than the collocation of faith and love. It is in line with the teaching of Jesus that Paul thus summarizes the Christian religion towards God and man; faith (rather than love) towards God, carrying with it love towards other Christians. The combination of the two is one of his creations.

There are indeed partial anticipations of the phrase, as e.g. in the book of *Wisdom* (iii. 9):

Those who put their trust in him shall understand truth,
and the faithful shall abide with him in love.

The second line, οἱ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ προσμενοῦσιν αὐτῷ, might also mean, *those who are faithful in love shall abide with him*; but this is less likely, and the other rendering sets the phrase beside a conception like that of John xv. 9 rather than beside Paul.[1] We need not hesitate to believe that he struck out the phrase about ‘faith and love’ for Christianity. No doubt the Christian religion could not be summed up in any phrase, even in ‘faith and love’; but these two words together did come nearer than any others to the heart and centre of the movement as it took shape. They were not monosyllables in Greek, but they are none the worse for being that in our English; they give a simple and profound idea of what distinguished Christianity in the first century, as Paul interpreted it to his contemporaries, and certainly there was no rival cult, not even Judaism, to which they could have been naturally applied. Repeatedly and emphatically faith and love are associated. In the Pauline theology faith is more than either surrender to Christ’s love and grace or mental assent to the truth of the gospel; it is trust and it is belief, but as both it has active functions in life. Negatively, in the apostle's dialectic, faith is opposed to works, since religion does not depend upon our exertions to make a good moral life and then present the outcome to God. Positively, faith is the heightening of the personal life by the Spirit in order to fulfil the supreme law of God, or to reproduce the life of God, which is love. The God who meets us in Christ, Paul teaches, is a God of love who forgives sins because He loves men. The response to this free and forgiving love is believing trust, such trust as carries love with it. All love implies trust, and trust in Another implies love, the love that devotes itself to the ends of that Other and identifies itself freely and fully with His purpose. But, as we have already noticed, Paul prefers often to speak of this devotion towards God or Christ as 'faith,' reserving 'love' for the human side.

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[1] Ignatius indeed (*Magn.* v. 2) has the same phrase: οἱ δὲ πιστοὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ *bear the stamp of God the Father.* Here it seems to mean, *those who believe and love.* If this were taken as the sense of the line in *Wisdom*, it would bring the phrase closer to the thought of Paul.

The apostle's first word on these two is striking: *Putting on the breastplate of faith and love* (1 Thessalonians v. 8). What has to be done with faith and love is to use them, in the difficult and dangerous life of our world, where there is so much to wound the soul and render it sceptical and cynical. Faith and love do not need a breastplate; they are the breastplate for life, i.e. for the active life. They do not require to be defended by anything exterior to themselves. Here, the apostle means, do we find the real protection to the soul in its intercourse with men; faith in God and the generous temper which it inspires have only to be practised in order to preserve Christianity from defeat, and they have to be put into exercise if they are to be valued and possessed. When men are tempted to be selfish or despairing or to relax their principles owing to difficult circumstances or bad treatment at the hands of their fellows, the sole security is to go on believing and loving; the one safe method for meeting life, the apostle teaches, is to face it with the Christian conviction about God and with the practical outcome of this in charitable feelings towards those who may irritate us or thwart us.

The profound phrase in Galatians v. 6 about *faith active in love* points to the same nexus between the two. *In Christ Jesus circumcision is not valid, neither is uncircumcision, but only faith*—and faith as a moral dynamic—*faith active in love.* Surrender to the control of Christ generates what is the vital spirit of Christ. In the context (ver. 5) the apostle has mentioned hope, as he had done in 1 Thessalonians i. 3 (*your active faith and labour of love and patient hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*), but this collocation of the three reaches its supreme expression in the 'Hymn of Love' (1 Corinthians xiii.).

Some other cases of faith and love in a close connexion are: 2 Thessalonians i. 3 (*your faith grows apace and your mutual love is increasing*),[1] Ephesians i. 15 (*your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love for all the saints*), and 1 Thessalonians iii. 6. In Philemon 5 we read of *your love and loyalty* (πίστιν) *to the Lord Jesus and to all the saints*, though some critics prefer to take this as an ambiguous expression which really means 'your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love to all the saints.' Normally, faith and love mean for Paul, as for Ignatius, belief in God and unselfish devotion to fellow-Christians; the effectiveness of such faith, whether viewed as trust or belief, comes out in a life of active service and self-devotion to the interests of others. This is voiced, as we have already seen, in Ephesians vi. 23, and it is echoed in the prayer *that Christ may dwell in your hearts as you have faith, that you may be so fixed and founded in love that you can grasp* (καταλαβέσθαι) *with all the saints what is the meaning of 'the Breadth,' 'the Length,' 'the Depth,' and 'the Height,' by knowing* (γνῶναί) *the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge* (Ephesians iii. 17–19).

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[1] Cranmer and Tyndale translate: *everyone of you swimmeth in love toward another.*

This implies not only the connexion of faith and love, but (i) that brotherly love is the condition of religious insight and grasp of spiritual truth ; for whilst *love* is to be taken in its full scope, the special stress here falls not on love to God (which would correspond to the thought of 1 Corinthians ii. 9 (see above, pp. 154 f.), but on mutual love within the Church. There is a further (ii) claim that the experience and insight of Christians yield them a knowledge of divine revelation far superior to all the current theosophies with their large talk about Breadth, Length, Depth, and Height. Paul employs terms used in such theosophy, as we find it for example in the later Poimandres writings, where not only *γνῶσις* but *καταλαμβάνειν* occur in this semi-mystic sense, and where, as in the magical papyri, the heavenly House of light is described in such astronomical terms ; for, as in Romans viii. 39, Height and Depth originally denoted the distance of the planets from the north pole, which determined in theosophy their favourable or unfavourable influence (see Plutarch, *Sept. Sap. Conviv.*, 3). According to Poimandres (x. 25), " no one of the heavenly gods descends to earth, quitting the bounds of heaven ; but man ascends even to heaven and measures it and knows what are its Heights and Depths, and learns all about it accurately. And greatest of all, he rises to heaven without leaving earth behind ; such is the power of ecstasy." The claim of the apostle is that what is thus the alleged privilege of individual mystic raptures belongs to the experience of the Christian Church under the divine revelation of heavenly mysteries ; such insight is not esoteric, nor is it gained by private séances, but by the common fellowship of the Church. As Dibelius puts it, " the blessed feeling which the mysteries impart to initiates is shared in Christianity by simple believers." And this bliss does not consist in spiritist experiences of ecstasy, but is definitely connected with the person of Christ as the Loving Lord. Instead of becoming absorbed and fascinated by current, high-sounding terms like ' Height,' etc., which in the contemporary cults must have corresponded to a modern term like 'the Absolute,' the apostle urges that Christians concentrate on the true object of religious knowledge as *the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge.* The superiority of this revelation to the vague idealism and mystical speculation of the day comes out again in Colossians iii. 1, where, as he summons Christians to an unworldly life, he bids them *aim at what is above* (τὰ ἄνω) and then explains this by adding, *where Christ is*, '*seated at the right hand of God.*' To seek or aim at τὰ ἄνω was a current phrase for idealistic aims or lofty thoughts; but τὰ ἄνω meant for Paul a realm where Christ lives and rules. Similarly in the Ephesians passage he puts the personal relationship to Christ far above any abstractions and speculations, adding the two words on mutual love as the basis for all such insight into truth and on Christ's love as the supreme object and theme for any effort to understand the Christian mysteries. Here, he means, we Christians may find all and more than all promised by such mystic speculations of the cults to their votaries. But this reach of the soul through love to Love depends on faith; for, as always, while Paul admitted there could be faith of a kind without love, there never could be love without faith.

5

This nexus of love with faith and knowledge is clearly shown in Colossians i. 4 f., ii. 2 f., where the apostle is congratulating the Church on its *faith in Christ Jesus* and its *love for all the saints—your love in the Spirit*, the love felt by these Christians for each other, though they might belong to different races or live on different social planes or, it may be, though otherwise (apart from the common tie of faith) they might not find each other naturally congenial. Then he prays for them and others, *May their hearts be encouraged! May they learn the meaning of love* (literally, *be instructed in*, as in 1 Corinthians ii. 16)! *May they have all the wealth of conviction* (or, assurance) *that comes from insight! May they learn to know that open secret* (literally, *mystery*) *of God*, etc. It is by thus being instructed in love, by learning thoroughly the lesson of this mutual life, that the goal of religious insight and assurance is attained; such is the thought of the apostle here, as elsewhere. He has in mind the speculative theosophy which laid little or no stress upon such love, as compared with keen enlightenment or ascetic ritual. At the same time, while brotherly love is thus essential, it requires to be made conscious of its principles. This is one of the apostle's repeated arguments about the faith. The unthinking acceptance of a traditional code or an external rule is bad for the spirit; but so is the unthinking surrender even to a good impulse like love.

> We live by admiration, hope, and love;
> And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
> In dignity of being we ascend.

It was the concern of Paul to have Christian love in his churches well and wisely fixed in an intelligent grasp of what the faith involved both practically and in the realm of higher truth; the affection was too precious to be left to itself, untrained and unguided by any insight into principle. He seems to have realized that an emotional love might readily end in a deterioration of the moral fibre, instead of developing character to meet the exacting demands of responsibilities and relationships for which thoughtfulness and keen perception were required.

Obviously, then, more was needed than the support of fellowship for individual Christians in that age. It was indeed imperative that they should join hands and hold together, for left to himself the new convert, who was exposed to the incessant saturation of paganism, might easily collapse; there was no public opinion to support him. But adherence to the Community was also needful in order to develop one's capacities and knowledge of the Lord, and this is an even more frequent message of the NT. Evidently the spirit of the age in certain quarters fostered a religious individualism which was inclined to seek communion with God apart from common fellowship. When Paul, for example, urges the corporate life of the Church as vital, when he pleads for love as the dominating spirit of the Community, he is swayed by the thought that the individual member of the society of God only rises as he shares fully in the love-duties of the group ; for as the love of God meets the soul with unselfish devotion for one and all, this cannot be realized apart from the sphere in which it is to be exercised. The love that gives is the love that grows ; the life that is not too proud to share the common life of the group, giving and receiving humbly and gratefully, is the life to which the deeper knowledge of the divine love and life is really opened up. Hence the warnings against a selfish individualism or against cliques and parties in the Church. The apostle is well aware that there are bound to be differences among members, owing to education and temperament ; some will be duller than others, some more quick to appreciate the religious mind which Christianity evolves, some by nature more reflective than their fellows, and so forth. He confessed that there were aspects of the gospel which he could only discuss with the mature members. For while the gospel could be preached to the simplest and received by the uneducated, he knew that there were issues and aspects of the message which required a deeper intelligence and trained insight. Paul had no sympathy with the idea that "whatever is not quite simple," or capable of being understood by a plain person at the first hearing, "cannot be of necessary belief or among the fundamental Articles or Essentials of Christian Faith."[1]

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[1] So Coleridge in his note on the 18th Aphorism on Spiritual Religion in *Aids to Reflection*. He adds, "The Faith which is to save the whole man must have its roots and justifying grounds in the very depths of our being. And he who can read the Writings of the Apostles, John and Paul, without finding in almost every page a confirmation of this, must have looked at them as at the sun in an eclipse, through blackened Glasses."

Nevertheless he identified this immaturity with defects in the love-spirit. *You are mere babes in Christ . . . with your jealousy and quarrels.* And on the other side he insisted that those who sought fuller knowledge were not to be fastidious seekers on their own account, but to be *so fixed and founded in love* that they could *grasp with all the saints* the range and scope of revelation. In the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians it is the temptation to overvalue showy individual gifts that he has in mind, as though these somehow brought one nearer to God than the modest, common love of members in the Community; but the principle is the same. For here he does not say that love is the greatest thing in the world; it is the greatest force in the community of the Lord—that is the direct message of the hymn on love. *I show you*—you quarrelsome, conceited Corinthians—*a more excellent* (καθ' ὑπερβολήν) *way* than your habit of exalting sensational special gifts as though these lifted you into the secrets of the life divine. Not so! The ambition to be initiated into the higher mysteries of the faith must take the high road of mutual service and dutiful love to those who share in the life of the Community. This is the superlative qualification for Christian fellowship.

6

Which brings us to the 'Hymn of Praise to Love.'

In his lines on Heine's Grave, Matthew Arnold asks—

> But was it thou—I think
> Surely it was! that bard
> Unnamed, who, Goethe said,
> *Had every other gift but wanted love;*
> Love, without which the tongue
> Even of angels sounds amiss?

Peace to the poet, it was not Heine but Platen to whom Goethe referred, in his talk with Dr. Eckermann on Christmas evening, 1825. "He has many brilliant qualities, but he is lacking in love. He loves his readers and his fellow-poets as little as he loves himself, and thus we may apply to him the maxim of the apostle—'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.' . . . He is deficient in love, and therefore will never produce the effect he ought."

These are the words of a "sharp and piercing sentence concerning the perishing of the soul, notwithstanding gifts and parts," which Bunyan found "of great use to him" (*Grace Abounding*, 297). They come from the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, from Paul's 'Hymn of Praise to Love.' Now, we do not parse a lyric, except in schoolbooks, and this great passage is a lyrical piece on Christian love. But it is not a collection of fine words and phrases, strung together without any connexion. The apostle is not speaking at random. First (1–3) he explains that without love the highest endowments and experiences of the Christian community are valueless, since their end is the good of the Community, and this good cannot be attained apart from the spirit of love. The ecstasies and transports of glossolalia are sound without sense, if they fail to pass beyond the private enjoyment of the individual; they are wonderful experiences, with their inarticulate cries of rapture, but unless they stir one to service and sympathy, unless they quicken the sense of affection and duty to other people, their emotional indulgence is merely a noise (ver. 1). What profit is an egoistic mysticism? Its raptures are sterile. Even prophetic insight into the lore of Christian truth, which fathoms spiritual mysteries, even the most effective faith, that by its sheer energy overcomes obstacles (see xii. 9 and Mark xi. 23), even that requires the spirit of love (ver. 2); otherwise it counts for nothing in the Church. The very renunciation of property may be self-centred or ostentatious; the capacity for self-sacrifice may be spoiled by pride, and self-immolation itself may be done in the wrong spirit (ver. 3), if the man parades himself as a martyr or as a 'persecuted' person. It is love alone which can inspire and give value to these great gifts for the common good of the Church.[1] Such is the opening stanza of the lyric.

Then comes the positive description of love at work (4–8), in face of temptations within oneself and among others to be loveless. *Love is very patient,*[2] *very kind.* This is the keynote to the whole of what follows, the considerate, kindly feeling which does not tire easily, which is never sharp and hasty. The first thing (ver. 4) that is apt to rouse bad feeling is success. But true *love knows no jealousy* of the success won by others, or of their happiness. Furthermore, *love makes no parade* of its own success, never brags, *gives itself no airs*; personal success does not lead to conceit, to self-inflation, to the bad manners which breed bad feeling in a community. Then (ver. 5) there are injuries as well as achievements which may create a difficult situation. The apostle declares that true love never injures other people nor resents injuries at their hands; *love is never rude, never selfish* (x. 24), *never irritated* by bad treatment, *never resentful.*[3] Finally (6, 7), when people live together, sins create difficulties for the maintenance of charitable feeling. Now, Christian *love is never glad* (οὐ χαίρει)[4] *when others go wrong*; it does not discuss a sin or a scandal with gloating, it does not dwell on the details, inwardly contrasting the offender with one's excellent self. It is possible to take a malignant satisfaction in the bad behaviour of others in our circle, and to criticize them with a self-complacent air. True *love is gladdened by goodness.* It is not in a hurry to drag things to the light; love is *always slow to expose,*[1] *always eager to believe the best,* instead of suspecting hastily the worst of people. And even when the wrongdoing cannot be hidden any longer, love is *always hopeful* that the offender will do better and pull himself together; it is a constant affection which is *always patient,* prepared to stand by him and give him time.

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[1] In Mr. Norman Leys's book on *Kenya* (p. 250) he quotes from a letter written by a Hindu to an English friend who proposed to go out as a missionary to India. "Will you be able to make yourself one with those whom you call natives, not merely in habits but in love? For it is utterly degrading to receive any benefit but that which is offered in the spirit of love."

[2] Μακροθυμεῖ, like God's own love (Romans ii. 4) or Christ's (1 Timothy i. 16); it is the virtue of keeping one's temper (Galatians v. 22) under exasperation (Colossians iii. 12) and provocation.

[3] In the light of Test. *Zebulun* viii. 5, 6: *love one another and do not reckon up* (*μὴ λογίζεσθε κακίαν*), *each of you, the wrongdoing of a brother, for that breaks up unity*, we might almost render the words, "Love does not enter in a ledger the wrongs done to it" (R. H. Charles).

[4] Compare Philo's description (*De Abrahamo*, 4) of the world, χαίρων ἐφ' οἷς στένειν ἄξιον, λυπούμενος δὲ ἐφ' οἷς γεγηθέναι καλόν.

Thus the praise of love ends as it began with the note on tenacity: *love is always patient,* it is not an affection which will wear out under the dragging conditions of human intercourse even among those who share the Christian faith.

> 'Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds.'

The trying relationships of life in a religious community do not crush it out. *Love never disappears* (ver. 8), for it is of eternal value. As the apostle sums up (ver. 13), either citing some current saying or quoting some phrase of his own, 'Faith and hope and love last on, these three'; *but,* he adds deliberately, *the greatest of all is love.* Greater even than faith, for there may be a faith without love, as he has already admitted, a strong, effective belief which is yet hard and loveless and therefore of no account. Also there may be hope which is selfish. But love, wherever it exists, carries both faith and love with it; *love believes all things, hopes all things.* Highly as he valued faith and hope, Paul saw that love meant faith and hope of the real kind, and therefore that this affection was more inclusive and central than the other two. Hence he at once adds (xiv. 1), *make love your aim*, your supreme concern in the Christian life, whatever other acquirements or accomplishments you prize.

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[1] The general idea may recur in 1 Peter iv. 8 and James v. 20, if the verb there has the kindred sense of 'palliate' (see below). The spirit of hatred, according to Test. *Gad* (iv. 3), "is eager to publish abroad" the offence of a brother, "and keen to have him judged for it and punished by death."

This 'Hymn of Love' was written out of a close and trying experience; if it is a rhapsody, it is the rhapsody of a realist who has come safely through contact with the disenchanting life of the churches; it is not a song in the air by one who idealizes religious life, but wrung from long intercourse with ordinary Christians, especially those at Corinth, where ascetic difficulties, a women's movement, the inveterate party-spirit of city-life, the Greek passion for rhetoric and theosophy, pietistic ardours, a love for what was showy and exciting, and personal animosities, due in part to differences in culture and social position, were threatening to tear the Church asunder. It is not possible to understand the teaching on love, here or elsewhere in Paul, without realizing the experiences of pastoral work and of missions to various communities which elicit his instructions. As it happens we know more about the internal relations of the Corinthian church than about any other in the Pauline world. It would be unhistorical to take the Corinthian situation as typical. At the same time it presents many characteristic features of the problem constantly presented by religious life in provincial townships of the Empire, where the surge of the new faith was stirring unprecedented difficulties for the Church, social and intellectual difficulties which were more complex than those stirred by the provincial country-life when Jesus had addressed the Galileans. At Corinth there was a risk of the Church running to tongue, for example. The vitality of the gospel roused fresh problems about belief which appealed to quick-witted members; the inevitable clash between the liberals and the more conservative Christians threatened to reduce the Church to a debating society. Problems of social ethics were also afoot, which sharply divided the members. Some had come over from paganism with religious conceptions (if any) which took small account of personal character; warmth of religious emotion was compatible with an undeveloped moral sense, which ran contrary to the stricter conscience of Christians who had been born Jews. There were distressing cases of moral relapse as well as of erroneous belief. Hence the aim of the apostle is to secure the atmosphere of mutual love in which alone such problems could be handled and solved. Argument was essential, and so was a just use of authority; but, he knew, neither by itself would avail to produce that unity of spirit which checked inconsiderate and overbearing behaviour. Narrow-minded as well as broad-minded were prone to insist on having their own way, to the detriment of peace and harmony. The inexperienced had to be educated, and the intelligent had to be warned against self-conceit, in the interests of sound belief and steady love. It is this object which rises to a climax in the 'Hymn of Love.' The chief stress is upon brotherly love, in the circumstances, though it is not merely loyalty to the community that is urged; behind all counsels on love, as we have seen, lies the conception of love as inspired by the Spirit and as, at heart, love to God. Still, this latter element is in the background here. Indeed, Paul's correspondence with these Corinthians is often the best commentary upon his 'Hymn of Love.' For example, the relations between the apostle and the church of Corinth offer two definite illustrations of what Christian love in a community meant. He had revisited the church, only to be insulted and defied. Something had gone wrong; perhaps a case of discipline had roused a risky amount of laxity which he felt obliged to correct. In any case his authority had been scorned, and he had painful memories of the strained relations which the visit had disclosed. Instead of returning he wrote a sharp letter. But, he explains later (2 Corinthians ii. 4), *I wrote you in sore distress and misery of heart, with many a tear—not to pain you but to convince you of my love, my special love for you,* i.e. to show them that they had wounded his affection for them, and that if he wounded them with his words it was the faithful wounds of a friend who had their highest interests at heart in his rebukes. His sharp concern for them, in the anxiety and pain which they had caused him by misconduct which he had felt himself bound to handle sternly, is, he claims, evinced by the spirit of what he had written. The trouble had been mixed up with some individual. But now that he has repented under your discipline, the apostle adds, do not be too harsh with him, *lest he be overwhelmed by excessive remorse. I beg you to reinstate him in your love* (ver. 8). He is anxious to prevent the church, in a mood of reaction, from showing their loyalty for himself by undue severity to the man who had been directly or indirectly the cause of all the trouble. It is the spirit of the serious, wise counsel given in the Westminster Confession of Faith (xv. 6): "As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof, upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy, so he that scandalizeth his brother or the church of Christ ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him and in love to receive him."

Another concrete illustration of this occurs in the letter to Philemon. This high-minded, prosperous Christian had already delighted the apostle by his hospitality and heartiness; *I have had great joy and encouragement over your love, my brother, over the way you have refreshed the hearts of the saints.* But the apostle has to make a further demand on him, for forbearing treatment of his runaway slave Onesimus, whom St. Paul is now returning to him as a converted man. He deprecates any severe attitude towards the slave, and reminds

Philemon that he is getting Onesimus back *no longer* as *a mere slave but something more than a slave—a beloved brother; especially dear to me* (who have been the means of his regeneration) *but how much more to you as a man and as a Christian!* . . . *Come*, *brother*, *refresh my heart in Christ* by treating him kindly. So far as we know, this was the first time that such a practical problem had arisen in the Church. It must have been a true test of Philemon's Christianity, to overcome the conventional rights of a master by yielding to the nobler Christian conception of a slave who belonged to the same fellowship of faith and therefore deserved, in spite of his past conduct, kindly consideration. To show love by being hospitable was not such a demand upon character as to believe in the penitence of a slave who had absconded. But it is a fine touch, that the apostle expects this reach of Christian love from his correspondent.

7

The phrase about 'faith, hope, and love' appears to come in at the end of the 'Hymn of Praise to Love' almost casually; but faith and hope had been already mentioned. It is futile to seek the origin of such a phrase in Hermetism or elsewhere. Such a collocation would not sound strange to the Corinthians, or indeed to any hearers of the apostle, if we may assume that his letters reflect his preaching. From the first he had spoken of these three attitudes of the soul, of *your active faith* (as in Galatians v. 6) *and labour of love and patient hope in our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Thessalonians i. 3), and again in describing the spiritual armour of Christians *clad in faith and love as our coat of mail, with the hope of salvation as our helmet* (v. 8). Here the special emphasis falls on faith being more than a formal or voluble belief, love being more than a fitful goodwill or a transient emotion, and hope being something better than a vague, passive yearning. In Colossians i. 4 he tells the local Christians, *We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and* *your love for all the saints, due to the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.* No doubt, hope is here objective, whilst faith and love are subjective terms, but evidently the apostle's mind easily moved from the thought of faith and love to the allied idea of hope. The errorists at Colossae assigned no share in the future bliss to faith and love as such, apart from ritual and ascetic rites, which alone (it was held) lifted impure humanity out of the demon-ridden world in which they had no hope; Paul therefore sets out the true ground of hope as the fundamental fact, which requires no more than faith and love from Christians. Similarly, although from a different angle, he unites faith and love to hope in Galatians v. 5, 6; *it is by faith* (not basing ourselves on any rite like circumcision, as though faith required to be supplemented) *that we* (ἡμεῖς, we who adhere to Christ) *wait in the Spirit for the righteousness we hope for* (at the end). Then, in order to explain what this confident faith or expectation involves, he instantly adds: *in Christ Jesus circumcision is not valid, neither is uncircumcision, but only faith active in love.* The three facts of vital Christianity are thus presented in summary form. Here, as in the Colossian passage, the apostle appears to emphasize the real Christian hope, which gives rise to faith and love. The last things were first, on the eschatological view; what determined life was its belief in the final End, to be realized through Jesus Christ, and those who looked forward to such a crowning bliss shaped their present life by the faith and the love which it evoked. In a less eschatological setting, the three appear together also in the prayer of Ephesians i. 15–18. Furthermore, passages like Romans xv. 5, 7, 13, 14, indicate that 'hope' was never far away from the apostle's mind when he thought of faith and love; on the one hand, faith naturally was indistinguishable from hope, in certain aspects, and faith and love were for him correlative terms, in describing the Christian position towards God and man succinctly. There is therefore no need to imagine any source for 'faith, hope, and love' than the original spontaneous mind of the apostle himself; if it reverses the more usual order of hope and love, the departure from the eschatological or chronological scheme is due to the lyrical praise of love as the climax and completion of life in the Community.

8

The eschatological aspect of love itself emerges, from another side, in 1 Thessalonians iii. 12, 13. *May the Lord make you increase and excel in love to one another and to all men (as is my love for you), so as to strengthen your hearts and make them blameless* (ἀμέμπτους) *in holiness before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones* (τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ). We have here (i) the connexion between brotherly love and love for the outside world, (ii) a nexus between love and holiness, and (iii) an allusion to Paul's own example of love. The first of these traits will be discussed later. As to the second (ii) the adjective ἀμέμπτους is employed proleptically, and defined in relation to ἁγιωσύνη or 'holiness' and (as in Philippians ii. 15) to the final Scrutiny. 'Holiness' in English may be, as Lord Morley once observed, "the deepest of all the words that defy definition," but it fairly represents a Greek term which had some definite content in religion. It is not one of Paul's favourite terms; he had other ways of expressing the intense, inward sense of purity evoked by the thought of God in the awakened conscience, although he does carry on the term *saints* (ἅγιοι) to denote Christians consecrated to God as well as angels. In this eschatological outlook of 1 Thessalonians iii. 12, 13 the complete stage of the Church is *in holiness*, ἁγιωσύνη being used for the perfect outcome of love; the connexion of this term with God, to which it is confined in the LXX (Psalms), is retained by Paul (Romans i. 4), but he extends it now and then to the relationship between the redeemed and the divine nature, always (see 2 Corinthians vii. 1) with a specific allusion to moral purity, the antithetical term being *ἀκαθαρσία*. From the context of the passage in 1 Thessalonians (see iv. 3–8) we gather that sensuality was a prominent item in *ἀκαθαρσία*, and evidently (see Romans xiii. 9, 10) sensuality is regarded as a form of the selfishness from which love will purify the true Christian. The perfecting of the Church *in holiness* is called its *ἁγιασμός* (1 Thessalonians iv. 3) or *consecration*, which denotes positively its relationship to the life of the Holy One or the Giver of the Holy Spirit (ver. 8), and negatively an avoidance of impurity and moral laxity. At Thessalonica it was particularly needful to underline the latter truth, since there were local cults, like that of the Cabiri, which tolerated, if they did not foster, a licentious indifference among their worshippers. Both aspects of *ἁγιασμός*, as a consecration which involves a break with a bad past, are clear in Romans vi. 19–22. The special preference of Paul for *love* was due to the negative associations of *holiness*; he further shows that real *holiness* is attained, not by a meticulous avoidance of external defilements, but by the practice of brotherly love. Like Jesus, he makes such brotherly love the final test of men at the Judgment. (iii) Finally, the apostle can point to his own love for the churches not only as an example (as here), but in proof of his personal integrity, as in 2 Corinthians vi. 4 f., where he argues passionately that he had shown himself a true minister of God by his *innocence* (of underhand or unworthy aims), *insight* (literally, ‘knowledge’), *patience* (*μακροθυμία*), *kindness* (*χρηστότης*), and *unaffected love*. Here love is allied to a group of terms which constantly illustrate its scope, particularly *μακροθυμία* and *χρηστότης* (Galatians v. 22, 1 Corinthians xiii. 4, Colossians iii. 12). The former quality is opposed to the quick-tempered anger which takes offence readily and retaliates; it is also the opposite of the impatience which breaks down under the long strain of God’s providence, but Paul rarely employs it in this sense, preferring *ὑπομονή*, though once he links both together

(Colossians i. 11, 12: *May his glorious might nerve you with full power to endure and to be patient cheerfully, whatever comes*). Μακροθυμία is reserved as a rule for the sphere of mutual relations between Christians in social life. There would be a partial exception to this, if *never lose your temper with anyone* (μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας) in 1 Thessalonians v. 14 could be taken with what follows, i.e. with the broadening range of love to the outside world as well (see below), instead of with the counsels of the foregoing passage on mutual Christian intercourse. As for a term like χρηστότης, it is the divine quality of kindheartedness or goodness which checks anything like hard severity in dealing with men ; this is never far away from the thought of pitiful and pardoning love.

9

Thus alone, the apostle teaches, can Christians live together in the Community, as they allow themselves to be bound by the law of the Lord, which is love. Freedom ? Yes, but not liberty to do as you like and say what you please, regardless of anyone else, for this would be a perversion of liberty. In the very letter where he argues most passionately for Christian freedom, he refuses to let this be made an incentive or occasion for the indulgence of selfish impulses ; *do not make your freedom an opening* (the headquarters) *for the flesh* (the lower nature), *but serve one another in love. For the entire Law is summed up in one word, in 'You must love your neighbour as yourself.' I mean*, he adds, *lead the live of the Spirit* (Galatians v. 13–16). So he opens the great argument upon the risk of abusing Christian freedom and upon the paramount need for thoughtful love in the Church. It is freedom to obey God's law in its spirit and essence. Paul assumes that the first instinct of the emancipated soul is to come under the commands of the Lord, and that the rejection of any merely human authority instantly deepens the consciousness of obligation to divine authority as Jesus had disclosed its norm and power.

A verbal parallel to Paul's warning, *whereas, if you snap* (δάκνετε) *at one another and prey upon one another*, in the spirit of selfish animosity, *take care in case you destroy one another*[1]—lies in Epictetus ii. 22, 28: οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρωπικὸν δόγμα ἐστὶ τὸ ποιοῦν δάκνειν ἀλλήλους. These are the 'enemies' whom Paul contemplates, rather than outside foes of the Church; hence in pleading for brotherly love he is really pleading for love to 'enemies,' since the worst enemy was a Christian who had much faith but little charity, strict belief perhaps but a hard, malicious, selfish spirit.

It is still more relevant to notice the parallel to Paul's plea for truly free love binding duty on itself, in the sentence where Epictetus protests (iv. 7. 16, 17:) *I have been made free by God, I know his commands, no one can any longer lead me as a slave.* This is the independent spirit of Stoic individualism, whereas Paul has a community in mind; but the same nexus of religious thought appears, freedom and obedience, the consciousness of divine emancipation from external and conventional authority leading at once to the consciousness not of arbitrary action but of obedience to the commands of him to whom we owe the new liberty. The condition of being free, Epictetus says elsewhere (iv. 1. 158), is that a man can truly declare, *the Law is everything to me* (i.e. the divine law of the universe).

As a consequence of this, the apostle shows how it is upon the spirit and discipline of this love that the perfecting of the church depends (1 Thessalonians iii. 12, 13). *May the Lord make you increase and excel in love to one another and to all men, so as to strengthen your hearts and make them blameless in holiness* at the imminent end. No form of holiness that sits loose to the obligations of brotherly love will come up to the standards of God, for the ‘ holy church ’ is the church that abounds and excels in such love ; ἁγιωσύνη or *holiness* implies the vital relation of life to the God to whom that life belongs, and His nature is love. Again, in Colossians iii. 14, where he is summoning the local church to the Christian graces of humility and patience and mutual consideration, he declares, *above all you must be loving, for love is* (σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος) *the link of the perfect life*, as it holds Christians together in fellowship under the strain of all common life. Love checks the selfish, hard tempers which keep people apart and thus militate against the maturing of good fellowship. Here τελειότης is the full expression of the divine life in the Community, devoid of bitter words and angry feelings, and freed from the ugly defects of immorality and dishonesty. The argument is a parallel to that of Matthew v. 43–48. “ By perfection,” says Wesley in a letter to his brother Charles, written about 1762, “ by perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, ruling all the tempers, words, and actions, the whole heart and the whole life.” No passage better illustrates the emphasis of the apostle upon the truth that for individuals to live the ‘ perfect ’ life of the Christian community, with all its hindrances to brotherly intercourse, such manly, thorough-going, love was absolutely essential.

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[1] No love, no church, as the prophet John also holds in Revelation ii. 1–5 (see below).

In 1 Corinthians xvi. 13, 14, the same counsel comes up again: *Watch, stand firm in the faith, play the man, be strong! Let all you do be done in love.* The last words are relevant, because energy is apt to make people insist upon their own way,[1] irrespective of the feelings of others and impatient with any who do not see things as they see them. They become dictatorial. It is in the very effort to uphold the faith and to carry it out that some are tempted by their sheer zeal to be arrogant and arbitrary, even for the good cause. They love to have the pre-eminence, and it is sometimes the only kind of love which is visible in their dealings with other people. Why does Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress* make Mr. Valiant-for-Truth be assailed by three knaves, Wildhead, Inconsiderate, and Pragmatick? Because he knew, as the apostle knew, strong convictions and religious ardour are tempted specially to be loveless; the strong-minded are apt to be impatient of their slower fellows, and to drive ahead, regardless of what other people hold and believe. Even apart from this masterful spirit, those who make moral advances themselves are tempted to be censorious as they view the imperfect lives of the majority, for strong convictions have a way of dividing as well as of uniting people. In these and other aspects, the need of Christian love is obvious, obvious at least to a penetrating mind like that of Paul.

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[1] “ Persons who have the same general design,” said Charles Simeon, the Cambridge Evangelical leader, “ but differ in some particular modes of carrying it into execution often stand more aloof from one another than they do from persons whose principles and conduct they entirely disapprove.” Strength of conviction furnishes a special temptation to be self-assertive and dictatorial, when those who do *play the man* are unable to make others agree with their aims or methods.

His earnest appeal in Philippians ii. 2–4 exhibits the qualities of this mutual love in the Church. He longs to learn that his friends are *living in harmony* (i.e. in agreement upon some practical aim), *with the same feelings of love* (i.e. breathing a common sentiment), *with one heart and soul, never acting for private ends* (in a factious or self-seeking spirit) *or from vanity, but humbly* (τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ) *considering each other the better man, and each with an eye to the interests of others*[1] *as well as to his own.* Humility and unselfishness are here stressed as the forces that make for unity in the Church; no passage perhaps, except the description of love at work in the thirteenth chapter of First

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[1] Tacitus mentions this quality among the reasons for the happy married life of his father-in-law Agricola; he and his wife lived in wonderful harmony, "per mutuam caritatem et in vicem se anteponendo" (*Agricola*, vi.).

Corinthians, does so much to show the definite cohesive qualities which Paul understood by ‘love.’

In Ephesians iv. 2, 3 the same claim or appeal occurs, but with particular reference to mutual forbearance; *live a life worthy of your calling, with perfect modesty* (ταπεινοφροσύνης) *and gentleness* (πρᾳότητος, as in 1 Corinthians iv. 21), *showing forbearance to one another* (ἀνεχόμενοι, as in Colossians iii. 13) *patiently* (μετὰ μακροθυμίας), *zealous in love to preserve the unity of the Spirit by binding peace upon yourselves*. Probably *in love* here goes with what follows, instead of with *showing forbearance*; but this matters little, since the general run of the appeal is for considerate and harmonious relationships, through love alone.

10

The risks of Christian love, the temptations and dangers to which it exposes Christians, are (*a*), to begin with, moral unreality. *Let love be without dissimulation* (Romans xii. 9), literally, ‘free from hypocrisy,’ as in 2 Corinthians vi. 6 (see above), ‘free from pretence.’ People, the apostle knew, might pretend to care for one another more than they really did, or they might use the phrases of love without putting their heart into them. Those who belonged to a Christian community knew that love was expected of them, and there was a real temptation to ape it; some might feign the appearance of love, either from the desire to be on good terms with their fellows, or for some ulterior end.

The worst form of this would be Iago’s:

> Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,
> Yet, for necessity of present life,
> I must show out a flag and sign of love,
> Which is indeed but sign.

Short of this malign spirit, however, there might be a pretence of affection practised in order to ingratiate oneself with others.

The insincerity of much human affection has been a common theme; shrewd observers have deplored it, from Marcus Aurelius[1] to Shakespeare with his "most friendship is feigning." In the sphere of the primitive churches the temptation to pretence was already present, particularly in the form of a genial indifference to moral interests. When Paul proceeds to explain what he means by unfeigned love, we perceive he has in mind something that might be confused with a kindly affection which is content to keep on good terms with people and to maintain pleasant relations, without any serious and steady concern for their moral welfare. *Let your love be a real thing, with a loathing for evil and a bent for what is good.* It may be easier to condone evil and to refrain from telling people the plain truth about themselves, but this, he declares, is a spurious form of Christian love.

The phrase in Ephesians iv. 15 (ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ) is commonly taken to mean the same thing; when it is rendered "speaking the truth in love," it might be not only a warning against the candour which disregards tact and kindness in dealing with other people, but also a word against the opposite tendency on the part of certain natures to spare other people pain or to humour them by modifying the truth, or by failing to give them such advice as they need, simply because such advice might be unwelcome. A partial parallel occurs in Galatians iv. 16 (ἀληθεύων = being honest with you). However, ἀληθεύοντες stands by itself in the sentence, and ἐν ἀγάπῃ goes with the following αὐξήσωμεν, the passage running thus: *we are to hold by the truth* (ἀληθεύοντες), instead of abandoning ourselves to any sort of heretical frauds or fancies, *and by our love* (ἐν ἀγάπῃ) *to grow up wholly into Him. For He, Christ, is the head, and under him, as the entire Body is welded together and compacted . . . the due*

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[1] E.g. vi. 39: "love (φίλει) the people among whom you are thrown, but love them sincerely (ἀληθινῶς)," and xi. 18: "good-nature always wins the day, if it be genuine, not an affected smile or playing a part (ὑπόκρισις)."

activity of each part enables the Body to grow and build itself up in love (ἐν ἀγάπῃ). Love is thus placed at the beginning and at the end of the passage, being the all-inclusive principle of Christian growth for the Church.

(*b*) This is not far from the second temptation, namely, flattery. Paul was keenly sensitive to the need of truthfulness and honesty in his mission. Common honesty demands that one never says what one knows to be untrue. But, as we have just seen, there is a further and more subtle risk of saying what we do not feel, simply because we are expected to say it, or because other people like it. And yet again, this may develop into a fresh form of unreality, if one talks in order to curry favour with people. The apostle happens to mention this danger in connexion with his mission to Thessalonica, asserting that he had loved these people too well to resort to flattery. They had *won his love*, and it had been a sincere love ; there had been no pandering to their whims and prejudices (1 Thessalonians ii. 5–12). This is often one form of dissimulation, a form to which ministers and evangelists are specially liable ; Paul alludes to it again in Galatians i. 13, though not in connexion with love. His sensitiveness on this point proves that he never lost sight of the fact that real Christian love implied a serious concern and respect for the moral character of men. To flatter people is as dishonourable as to be servile ; it means that we have a low estimate of them, which is out of keeping with love.

(*c*) The prayer in Philippians i. 9 f. is that these warmly affectionate Macedonians may ripen into a character which has a grasp of religious principle : *it is my prayer that your love may be more and more rich in knowledge and all manner of insight* (instead of remaining on the level of emotionalism), *enabling you* by this moral perception *to have a sense of what is vital* (really important), *so that you may be transparent and no harm to anyone* (the negative side of love) *in view of the day of Christ* (at which judgment love will be the standard), *your* *life covered with that harvest of righteousness* (δικαιοσύνης, moral goodness, the result of relationship to Christ) *which Jesus Christ produces.* "The wise want love, and those who love want wisdom," was one of Shelley's judgments upon life. Paul declares here that the sentiment of love is not sufficient by itself; those who are good-natured are well fitted to be Christians, but they must not forget that wisdom or knowledge is required, in the shape of moral discrimination and penetration, for mature life in a community as well as for the individual who is exposed to the contaminations of pagan society. To be affectionate is not everything; one must be intelligent also. It is a warning against confusing brotherly love with a blind amiability. Over and again, as the apostle knew, mistakes are made, opportunities are missed, and wrong is done to others as well as to oneself, by unenlightened love no less than by unenlightened sincerity.

This, the third risk of love, is on the verge of the emotionalism which stops short of action—a phenomenon which he evidently has in mind in the two allusions of 2 Corinthians viii., the famous chapter on the collection. After mentioning the wonderful liberality of some other churches, he turns to the Corinthians: 'Show *your* love for us by contributing amply and instantly to this fund for the poor; let this response of practical charity be *the proof of your love* (ver. 24). *I am not issuing any orders, only using the zeal of others to prove how sterling your own love is.*' "Love is nothing else than goodness put in motion," Bacon once observed. It is more than that, for goodness needs to be guided by thoughtfulness and principle. However, the definition stands against the spurious form of love which, as Paul hinted here, will not move into action out of the comfortable quarters of selfish enjoyment or of amiable emotion.

II

The material for Paul's references to love between individual Christians falls into three concentric circles.

There is (*a*) his love for specific persons in the churches, as e.g. for *my beloved* Epaenetus, Amplias, Stachys, and Persis (Romans xvi. 5–12), for *our beloved Luke* (Colossians iv. 14), for Philemon, and Onesimus the slave (Philemon 1, 16), for *his beloved son* Timotheus (1 Corinthians iv. 17, 2 Timothy i. 2), and for *our beloved brother* Tychicus (Colossians iv. 7, Ephesians vi. 21). The significance of such allusions lies in this, that they prove how far the apostle was from being absorbed in his propaganda to the exclusion of interest in his friends and fellow-workers. A great purpose seems to swallow up the kindly feelings of certain natures. They become more interested in ideas or organizations than in the human beings for whom they are working. Hawthorne depicts a character of this kind in Hollingsworth, the ruling spirit of the community in the *Blithedale Romance*, a man who had no close friends simply because he lavished his affection on his philanthropic aim. " He had taught his benevolence to pour its warm tide through one channel, so that there was nothing to spare for other great manifestations of love to man." He had the truly disinterested aim of doing good to people, but he sacrificed the natural sympathies of life to his zeal. And, Hawthorne adds, " this is always true of those men who have surrendered themselves to an overruling purpose. . . . They have no heart, no sympathy, no reason, no conscience. They will keep no friend, unless he make himself the mirror of their purpose." Paul avoided this danger. He was generous to his coadjutors and genuinely interested in the friends who touched his life. Up to the very end he seems to have retained the power of inspiring loyalty and affection in them, by his warm personal care. The allusions to his affection for this one and that show that he was very far from being a narrow, dry fanatic. As he calls them *beloved* or 'dear,' sometimes adding *in the Lord*, it proves that he respected their individuality and that he was capable of taking a genuinely personal interest in those for whom and with whom he worked in the mission. People are quick to feel this in a man. They respond to it—as we see many of Paul's friends doing.

The allusions (*b*) to his affection for special churches and groups, which are scattered through the epistles, are bound up with references to the affection of such groups for himself. Some of these have been already noted in other connexions. But others deserve mention here, as for example his grateful thanks to the Thessalonian Christians (1 Thessalonians iii. 6) for the good report of them brought by Timotheus—*the good news of your faith and love and of how you always remember me kindly*. The Corinthian correspondence is crowded with allusions to this love. *Am I to come to you with a rod of discipline or with love and a spirit of gentleness* (πρᾳότητος, 1 Corinthians iv. 21)? *My love be with you all in Christ Jesus* (1 Corinthians xvi. 24)! His eager affection for the Corinthian community, which had so tried his patience, throbs in incidental remarks like those of 2 Corinthians ii. 4, xi. 9–11, and xii. 14–15. Again, he bids the Thessalonian Christians hold their leaders *in special esteem and affection* (ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ) *for the sake of their work* (1 Thessalonians v. 13)[1]; he tells the Corinthian church to reinstate the offender *in their love* (2 Corinthians ii. 8), forgiving him after his penitence; and he beseeches the Philippians (Philippians ii. 1–3) *by every incentive of love* to give him the utter joy of learning that they are *living in harmony, with the same feelings of love*, etc.

Of the allusions in 2 Corinthians, ii. 4 and ii. 8 have been already explained. The other two are not less significant. Paul had refused to allow the Corinthian churches to be at the expense of supporting him, and they evidently resented this, as if it were a reflection on their devotion to him. *I intend to keep myself from being a burden to you in any way. . . . Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do.*

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[1] This admonition is conveyed even more pointedly by the writer of *Barnabas* (xix. 9): *Thou shalt love as the apple of thine eye every one who tells thee the word of the Lord.*

No, he explains, it is to silence my opponents who are quite ready to take money, holding that this is the proof and prerogative of 'an apostle.' I do not want to hurt your feelings, but I must follow this policy, to prove that I am not actuated by any mercenary motives. *I want yourselves, not your money. Children have not to put money by for their parents ; that is what parents do for their children. And for your souls I will gladly spend my all and be spent myself. Am I to be loved the less because I love you more than others?* It is incidental remarks like these which prove how sensitive the apostle was to the affection of his churches, and how practically he sought to prove his affection for them. The Corinthians were touchy, they were apt to misunderstand his motives. Hence he clears the matter up. It was bad enough for them to doubt his affection because he had spoken sharply to them about a serious case of moral deflection ; it would be no less deplorable if they suspected his love because he, for the best of reasons, refused to be an encumbrance to them.

His words to the Thessalonian Christians tell their own story (1 Thessalonians ii. 7, 8): *We behaved gently when we were among you, like a nursing mother cherishing her own children, fain, in our yearning affection for you, to impart not only the gospel of God to you but our very souls as well—you had so won our love* (διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε). This breathes the spirit of unselfish devotion in a manly nature.[1] But even more characteristic and significant is the outpouring of his heart in Philippians i. 8, 14 f., where he speaks of his affectionate yearning to see the Philippians as Christ's own affection. God only knows how deeply I long for this! *God is my witness that I yearn for you all with the affection* (ἐν σπλάγχνοις) *of Christ Jesus himself!* This yearning affection is no mere emotion ; it prompts him to prayer for his absent friends (ver. 9 f.). Furthermore, he displays magnanimity in referring to the local situation, where his imprisonment had been the means of stirring up others to preach the gospel. His unselfish love emerges in the estimate of what was going on. *Some, it is true, are actually preaching Christ from envy and rivalry, others from goodwill; the latter do it from love to me . . . but the former proclaim Christ for their own ends, with mixed motives, intending to annoy me as I lie in prison. What does it matter? . . . Christ is being proclaimed, and I rejoice over that.* The conservative party, of Jewish Christian sympathies, were all the more eager to take advantage of the apostle's imprisonment, by pushing their propaganda. They took the field in force, now that he was silenced for the time being. They did not conceal a mean satisfaction in thinking that their success would annoy their rival, now condemned to inactivity. Others, more in sympathy with Paul, preached *from love* to him, i.e. endeavouring to take his place and to represent his free gospel. They desired him to have this pleasure in his confinement, the knowledge that his views were not being dropped, though he himself could no longer utter them. Paul reciprocates this friendly feeling. He also crushes down any personal feeling of annoyance at the policy and aims of those who differed from him. They wanted to make him uneasy because the gospel was being

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[1] The apostle's devotion to Christ in this mission may be contrasted with the mixture of combativeness and mystical fervour which made Francis de Sales write in 1595, as he essayed to convert sinners and heretics (*Œuvres*,

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xxii. 104): "*Amor meus furor meus!* Mon amour est toute ma fureur. Il me semble, en effet, que mon zèle se soit changé en une fureur pour mon Bien-Aimé; et je dois redire souvent ces petits vers:

Est-ce l'amour ou la fureur
Qui me presse, O divin Sauveur?
Oui, mon Dieu, ce sont tous les deux,
Car je brûle quand je vous veux."

It is fair to say that in his later *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu* (1614) he modifies this extravagant attitude, but only to allow his zeal for love to God to devour his sense of manly delicacy.

preached on lines of which he disapproved; thinking he was as jealous as they were, they attributed their own selfish feelings to him. But he is too high-minded to resent their actions. Better Christ should be preached, even imperfectly, than not preached at all! The apostle was keenly concerned about what we call 'theology'; he knew how much depended upon the way in which men thought of Jesus as Lord. But an exclamation like this is a sidelight upon his profound belief that the uppermost thing was not his views but his Master. He cared for nothing, if only the Lord was made visible to men, however imperfect, from his point of view, the medium might be.

When he sums up his record of hardships in the apostolic vocation by declaring, *and then there is the pressing business of each day, the care of all the churches* (2 Corinthians xi. 28), he does so in no spirit of self-pity. It is another sidelight upon his great, generous soul. He sympathized intensely with their difficulties, spared neither time nor strength to help them, and was justly indignant when their faith was injured. This was how he proved his love for these inexperienced communities whom he was glad as well as proud to bear upon his heart. "What is love," as George Eliot asks, but "an enfolding of immeasurable cares which yet are better than any joys outside our love?" We may be sure that *beloved*, which is often on Paul's lips as he addresses these communities, was no formal phrase. Sometimes it is *my beloved* or *beloved* alone, sometimes *my beloved children* or *my beloved brothers*, once (in Philippians iv. 1) *my brothers dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown*, never, as it happens, *my brother in the Lord.*

The allusions (*c*) to love for the outside world are less numerous. Some have been already noted in passing, e.g. 1 Thessalonians iii. 12, where the apostle warns the church against becoming parochial in its sympathies; the thought, though not the word, occurs perhaps in Romans

xii. 17 f., where the scope of love-duties seems to include more than the Christian brotherhood. However, it is in Galatians vi. 10 that the wide range of ἀγάπη is explicitly affirmed: *as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men and in particular to the household of the faith.* Here τὸ ἀγαθόν is the moral ideal of love as kindness and helpfulness, a close parallel being 1 Thessalonians v. 15: *see that none of you pays back evil for evil, but always aim at what is kind* (τὸ ἀγαθόν) *to one another and to all the world* (εἰς πάντας). The friction between the local Christians at Thessalonica and the non-Christian fellow-citizens (ii. 14), Jews as well as pagans, was not to be allowed to stir any feelings of resentment and retaliation; it is urged, on the lines of Jesus, that Christians owe kindness even to outsiders who ill-treat them. In writing to the Galatian Christians Paul has not this specific situation before his mind, and consequently the flexible term τὸ ἀγαθόν there means "goodness," in the broad sense of helpfulness.

The insistence upon the nearest duty (*in particular to the household of the faith*) is a healthy note, as against any vague cosmopolitanism such as Hellenistic religious philosophy propounded.

> God loves from whole to parts; the human soul
> Must rise from individual to the whole.

To make love practical and to save it from evaporating into a general sentiment of affable goodwill, the apostle recalls his hearers to the sphere of the Church in the first place, since there the function of real love met believers. The outside world was a soiling power rather than a persecuting power as yet; for Paul it was an evil sphere, where temptations to a profane life swarmed, against which he had to safeguard his churches. His letters reveal this as his primary concern. It is sometimes made a reproach against the apostle's ethic, and indeed against other NT writers, that they narrowed the wide sympathies of Jesus to an interest in church brotherhood. But this rests on a modern misconception. Christian love such as Jesus had taught for all and sundry was belief in God's ends within them, and it was the controlling sense of this that prompted missions; the fellowship of the Church was open and opened to people of all nations. *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*—as one prophet put it. And the satisfying Water was offered to thirsty souls in the great world. The deepest service of Christian love was rightly understood as the imparting of this gospel. Short of that, of course, there was friendly service and aid to any in need, no matter whether they were Jews or pagans. This, by common consent, Christians rendered; it was one of the outstanding tributes paid to them by public opinion, that their human and humane interests flowed out upon people who did not share their faith. Again, there was the forgiving spirit; when they were ill-treated and abused by outsiders, the injunction of Jesus was wonderfully obeyed in all circles of the early Church, and thereby the command of love was ratified. These generous and forbearing attitudes were frequently an effective means of propaganda. But they were not adopted merely for that reason, and even when they did not produce that effect, Christians continued to practise them. It is unhistorical and superficial to expect any other kind of sympathy with the world in the early Church. Christians had learned from their Lord that the heart and treasure of love lay in a religious relationship, and it was their instinctive concern to share this with others, not to promote vague sympathies with men in general on the ground of a supposed brotherhood of mankind. We misinterpret primitive Christianity entirely if we suppose that with Paulinism there begins a restricting of love to some sectarian morality, which gained intensity at the expense of universal range. When one considers the provocations to which the early Christians were exposed, and the pressure of pagan civilization which tended to put them on the defensive, in order to preserve their flame of life from being blown out by the strong winds of the world, it becomes indeed remarkable how few lapses there were from the conciliatory, kindly temper of Christian charity, and how persistently upon the whole the churches clung to the heroic unselfishness which Jesus had inculcated on his followers in dealing with outsiders. In estimating this aspect of love in Paulinism, as in the later spheres, we do well to bear in mind these two considerations: first, that no such sublimated cosmopolitanism as that expressed by 'the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man' was ever dreamed of as equivalent for the real Christian message of love; and secondly, that while the apostle warned his followers against reducing the church to a religious club, he was keenly alive, and sought to make them alive, to the fact that the Church was the Household of the faith, in which members had a primary duty to their fellows, however kindly and sympathetic they might feel and act towards people on the outside.

12

In conclusion, we may sum up this section by recalling the fundamental importance of love, thus defined, as the principle of life in the churches. It safeguarded them against three perils[1] of the age.

(*a*) One was the danger to harmony and good feeling roused by ascetic developments. The emphasis upon love as the supreme and comprehensive expression of religion meant that, as the apostle taught, the centre of gravity in Christianity does not lie in any rite or formula, nor in any food-tabu. Love must be left free to express itself, instead of being identified with sabbath-keeping or any devotion to fasts; it raised the Christian above petty scruples about such matters. There was urgent need for this, as the Epistle to the Romans, for example, indicates. Christianity might be misrepresented as a cult whose chief concern was to lay embargoes on food. The average Roman, attracted to the Church by its moralism and monotheism as well as by its devotion to the Lord Jesus, might well hesitate, wondering whether this movement after all was to be anything better than Judaism with its petty prohibition of pork, a food he loved; he might indeed ask, in a puzzled and irritated frame of mind, if devotion to the one God involved some antiquated Oriental tabu? The weaker party in the Church were in danger of reducing their religion to a sort of Orphic or Neo-Pythagorean blend of mysticism and vegetarianism, as though abstinence from wine and flesh were a vital matter. It was not superfluous for Paul to recall the Church to the truth that *the Realm of God is not a matter of eating and drinking*, as narrow moralists in its membership were suggesting; *it means righteousness, joy, and peace in the holy Spirit.* What Jesus had done in Palestine, by putting the 'clean'-traditions of Pharisaism in the second place, Paul and other leaders had to do later, by showing that similar tabus of Oriental or Hellenistic origin were subordinate to the true and primary principles of the faith; otherwise the moral proportions of religion would have been lost, as they generally are by the narrowly scrupulous.[1] This was a service, as it always is; for however useful such narrower moral regulations may be, upon occasion, they cannot be permitted to absorb the religion as a whole. And this they are apt to do. The very care for them may easily obscure attention to the greater principles themselves. Consequently "he who casts on any set of duties the shadow of the second best, so far as he is successful, does more to influence the moral ideal than he who succeeds in passing a new law."[2] Paul taught that this consciousness of brotherly love as the outcome of faith invested the true Christian with an inward freedom from all such petty preoccupations and exaggerations. At the same time as he showed how love kept the Church from lapsing into a discreditable group of people who resembled, in the eyes of outsiders,

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[1] The two first are noted by Weinel in his *Bib. Theologie des N.T.*, pp. 390 f.

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[1] This is admirably stated by Jowett, in his edition of *St. Paul's Epistles*, ii. pp. 161 f.

[2] Julia Wedgwood, *The Moral Ideal*, pp. 373, 374.

> A sect whose chief devotion lies
> In odd perverse antipathies,

he also indicated how love laid restraints upon the freedom of the liberals. Fretful spite on the part of the ultra-scrupulous and contemptuous self-assertion on the part of the stronger might have wrecked the Church of the first generation over such problems ; asceticism usually produces strained relations between those who cannot see eye to eye on particular details of ethical discipline, and the one effective method of surmounting the risks of quarrelsomeness and division, the apostle realized, was the spirit of genuine Christian love.

(*b*) But mysticism as well as moralism has been often an uncomfortable ally to the faith. In the first century already we can detect how in certain quarters there were intense experiences of the divine vision, accompanied by physical symptoms, which are an anticipation of subsequent mysticism. These were often generated by the glowing consciousness of contact with the supernatural, on the part of individual Christians. Nor does the apostle rule them out. Indeed one of his first duties was to protest against cool members of the Church who depreciated such manifestations of the Spirit. We are so apt to conceive of the primitive Church as a society in which every man resembled a howling dervish and every woman a Jump-to-Glory Jane, that it startles us to find that this warning was needed at the threshold of its history: *Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings ; prove all things ; hold fast that which is true.* 'Never quench the fire of the

Spirit, never despise or disparage such outbursts of fervour[1] as if they were no more than silly vapourings; never disdain prophetic revelations, but test them, neither rejecting them nor accepting them blindly as infallible and authentic voices of God; retain what is true and good in all this, sifting the phenomena in the light of your Christian judgment' (1 Thessalonians v. 19–21). At Corinth, however, the apostle found a disposition to over-value this mysterious gift and power, probably among converts who had been accustomed to such emotional excitement in the cults. Indeed the ecstatic passion in its mystical and rapturous developments now threatened to disturb the harmony as well as the good sense of the Church. It tended to individualism, for one thing, particularly in some egoistic expressions like glossolalia, or 'speaking with tongues,' a phenomenon of revivalism in the ancient world which had emerged in Christianity. Now, Paul urges, love alone builds up the community; the essence of this love is regard for the good of others in the religious fellowship, and consequently it is the truly cohesive power of the faith. To go in for rhapsodies or to cultivate ecstatic moods might be striking and enjoyable, but such emotional outbursts were too likely, as he saw, to prove an indulgence of personal religion which took people away into a corner and rendered them indifferent to the larger good of the fellowship. Moods of spiritual exaltation are apt to render people supremely interested in themselves as well as to foster a sense of superiority to the rank and file, as though one did not require any fellowship with them in order to become united to God. It is a proof of the apostle's clear insight and of his affinity to the teaching of Jesus that he rejects such a plausible misconception of religious progress. At the heart of his teaching on love lies the conviction that those who lay on their hearts the lowliest duties of common fellowship are the only people who are likely to have their souls occasionally set apart like stars in the high heaven of truth and vision.

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[1] When an unbalanced, impulsive woman appeared at his meetings, Wesley refused to allow her to be banned. He treated the erratic visionary as Paul had taught. "How much preferable is her irregular warmth," he reflected (*Journal*, September 14th, 1763), "to the cold wisdom of them that despise her?" His contemporary, Bishop Butler, cool as he was, marked the same danger in the cheap depreciation of Methodist 'enthusiasm.' "We are got into the contrary extreme to enthusiasm under the notion of a reasonable religion; so very reasonable as to have nothing to do with the heart and affections."

(*c*) The intellectualism of certain circles had also to be countered by a stress on love, as we have seen more than once and shall see again. The classical view that knowledge and goodness were somehow one, had been long modified in contemporary Hellenism, but there was enough of the old Greek tradition on this matter to make Paul suspicious of intellectual conceit, not only as pride against God but as a source of unseemly contempt for the uneducated in the Church, which bred divisions and misunderstandings. It is in view of this peril that he develops his conception of brotherly love as the indispensable condition of any religious knowledge which is worth having.

Highly therefore as he valued the ascetic discipline (personally he preferred celibacy, for example), highly as he appreciated the ecstatic temperament (for he was proud of his own prophetic gifts and would never have that type of spiritual phenomena despised), highly as he valued learning and the labour of the mind in the sphere of the Christian gospel, he was keenly alive to the dangers dropped by such developments in the line of Church unity and fellowship. In the ordinary cults of the age true efforts were made to provide members with fellowship such as the soul craved, but this brotherhood was not directly connected as a rule with the ecstatic visions sought by individuals in the ritual ; the tie of faith and love in the cults, if we may speak of such a tie at all, was a dim and casual thing compared with the Christian synthesis. Paul appears to have been acutely conscious of the incipient individualism which lay so near to the Church amid the philosophical speculations and the religious cults of the day ; his whole valuation of love indicates that he moved more under the spirit of the Hebrew faith at this point than of any Hellenistic sympathies. Or, as it would be more correct to say, his stress on brotherly love as the sole, safe line for Christians flowed from his fundamental conception of the nature of God Himself, and from his profound insight into the mind of Jesus Christ. Will you ruin, by your insistence upon your own ' enlightened ' way, he asks the liberal Corinthian Christians, *the weak brother for whom Christ died* ? A remark like this, dropped almost incidentally, illustrates the source of the ethical harmony for which he pled in the churches. It was derived from his profound sense of what lay behind the life which culminated in the death of the Lord. There it was that he—

> Saw into the depths of human souls,
> Souls that appear to have no depth at all
> To careless eyes.

Such carelessness, due to an imperfect grasp of the love that inspired the gospel, was the ruin of fellowship in the Church, and the apostle bends his powers to exorcise it from the community. *Make up your mind*, he bade the Roman liberals, *never to put any stumbling-block or hindrance in your brother's way* by carelessly deriding and outraging his petty scruples about food. *If your brother* Christian *is being injured* in conscience *because you eat a certain food, then you are no longer living by the rule of love. Do not let that food of yours ruin the man for whom Christ died.* The spirit of the Lord's teaching about stumblingblocks is not more plain than the high motive which appeals to an estimate of human character in the light of the Cross. A man for whom Christ thought it worth while to die deserves some thought and consideration from his fellow-believers, if they are to have the love that forms the rule of faith.

PART C

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

The life disclosed in these scattered writings is, as we might expect, the life of Christians sharing variously the corporate faith of the Church in which the theology of Paul acted like a ferment; but none of them exactly reflects his interpretation of the divine love. Here are circles in which honest, plain people evinced a stedfast devotion to the Lord, without thinking out their faith as Paul had done, whether or not they were conscious of his arguments about the meaning of the death and resurrection of the Lord. The really common element is the conviction that God was good or loving, and that the world was a place where they could count on His presence and help, through Jesus Christ. What preoccupies their minds is not so much any question of saviour-gods or of how Jesus was 'Lord' as polytheism; it is against the background of belief in a variety of deities that their faith rises, with its emphasis on God as one and as loving, i.e. as a God who made the world intelligible and who was reliable in His will. Paul had put it concisely when he wrote to Corinthians who were familiar with the multitude of deities: *so-called gods there may be in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are plenty of them, both gods and 'lords'* (Lord Sarapis and the rest of them)—*but for us* Christians *there is but one God, the Father, from whom all comes and for whom we exist; one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom all exists, and by whom we exist.* So much at anyrate the early Church understood, though they might not follow the apostle's arguments about the Lord and the Father; *there is one God and one mediator between God and men*—and the name for this religion was often 'love,' in the fundamental sense of the Pauline interpretation. That is, these Christians could live and breathe freely in a world from which the fatalistic cloud of astrological religion had been banished, as well as the mist of uncertainty raised by a swarm of deities competing for human patronage. Their thought of God as loving did not pass into love-language as a rule. But, while none of the documents is earlier than the Pauline letters, some reflect the general sense in which the Church before Paul called Jesus 'Lord,' and all assume a clear belief in Jesus as divine; indeed their difficulties are occasioned by this belief, not by any tendency to add divine predicates to a human founder. From faith in Jesus as the divine founder and redeemer or Lord, the thought of these writings springs. Furthermore, their loyalty to him is a loyalty to God which issues in obedience to his commands; thus it is that their love for him is mainly expressed. Here there was a predisposition in some mystery-cults which attempted to discipline the life of their adherents; a cult like that of Isis, for example, enforced a certain kind of moral purity on its worshippers, who were expected to obey the injunctions of the deity, though the thought of obedience to divine commands was Oriental or Semitic rather than Hellenistic. The line of thought is most plainly marked, as continuing that of Paul, in connexion with brotherly love, where the cardinal principles of the teaching of Jesus are carried on and worked out, in connexion with the controlling thoughts of God's providence and claim to moral obedience.

I

IN the primitive Church, during the lifetime of Paul and for about a generation after his death, there seem to have been comparatively few allusions to God's love, if we may trust the extant literature. The letters of Ignatius thrill with the sense of love divine, indeed; the epistle of Barnabas is addressed by the anonymous author to his *sons and daughters, in the name of the Lord who loved us*; Clement of Rome reminds the quarrelsome Christians at Corinth that *in love the Master welcomed us, for the sake of the love he had toward us did Jesus Christ our Lord give his blood for us, by the will of God, his flesh for our flesh, his life for our lives* (xlix. 6); and in the eucharistic prayer of the *Didachê* (x. 5) the worshippers entreat God, *remember thy Church, O Lord, to deliver her from all evil and to perfect her in thy love.* But in the letters and writings which were selected for the NT God's love is not prominent. There is no mention of it, for example, in the book of Acts or in the epistle of James. In the Pastoral Epistles, with the partial exception of Titus iii. 4 f., it is absent. Even more striking is the absence of the term in this connexion from the beautiful First Epistle of Peter. Peter never speaks of God loving men. God is the faithful Creator, who can be relied on absolutely to protect Christians in danger; He is the God of all grace who brings them through temptation and suffering, the Father who chooses them and cares for them in His great mercy, and so forth; all the elements of the divine love in its characteristically Christian disclosure are present to the apostle's mind, but he never says explicitly that God loves men. The prophet John, in the Apocalypse, on the other hand, does mention God's love for Christians, but he does not call God their Father.

I

Once, indeed, the connexion of love and pity in God, which we found in Ephesians ii. 4 f., is reproduced by the Pauline author of the Pastorals. It is one of the 'sure sayings' preserved in this group of letters. *The goodness* (χρηστότης) *and affection* (φιλανθρωπία) *of God our Saviour appeared; and he saved us, not for any good deeds we had done ut from his own pity* (ἔλεος) *for us, by the water that means regeneration and renewal*, etc. (Titus iii. 4, 5). Here the common Hellenistic term φιλανθρωπία corresponds to χάρις, for the writer had already said that *the grace of God has appeared* (ii. 11). Paul generally prefers the latter term even to ἔλεος, in order to express the thought of saving energy and undeserved favour in the love of God. Indeed the writer of the Pastorals himself at once recalls the Pauline language, in adding that we are thus *justified by his grace* (ver. 7). The explicit connexion of regeneration with the sacrament of baptism is not so unique as this periphrasis of *goodness and affection* for *love*.

(*a*) The collocation of χρηστότης and φιλανθρωπία as human qualities was a Hellenistic mode of speech, as we see from writers like Lucian. But as qualities of God they are best illustrated by the *Epistle to Diognetus* (ix. 2): *When the time came which God had fore-ordained for the manifestation henceforth of his goodness* (χρηστότητα) *and power—oh the surpassing affection* (φιλανθρωπίας) *and love of God!—he did not hate us nor reject us, nor did he remember us for evil, but was longsuffering* (ἐμακροθύμησεν), *he endowed us, and himself in pity* (ἐλεῶν) *took our sins, himself gave his own Son as ransom for us*, etc. In the same document (viii. 7 f.) God is called φιλάνθρωπος κτλ, in view of the incarnation and revelation of Christ to men. The adjective became common in the worship of the Greek Church as a term for the divine love. Thus in the last verse of the anonymous hymn, from the sixth century perhaps, which Dr. Neale renders—

> Lover of men, oh hear my call,

the original is ἀγαθὲ ὡς φιλάνθρωπε. Another early Greek hymn to Christ invokes him as 'God the merciful, lover of men' (ἐλεήμων καὶ φιλάνθρωπος θεός).

(*b*) This love of God as Saviour is by itself in the first century. The cults of the day had slain gods but no saviour-gods who thus died in love for their worshippers. When Christians spoke of One who, *though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor*, of *our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us that he might redeem us*, of the Father sending the Son *to be the Saviour of the world*, they were thinking of a divine love which was saving as they had never understood it in any mystery-cult. "The most distinctive characteristic of Christian doctrine, as compared with other religions of the time, was the conception of a 'Saviour,' i.e. a divine Person who has descended from a higher world to rescue human souls from their fallen condition" (W. Scott, *Hermetica*, ii. 9). To this there is no real analogy in the mystery-cults, nor is the use of 'Saviour' elsewhere a religious parallel.

The same stress on the divine mercy is heard in the Benedictus, where Luke strikes the keynote of the gospel (i. 78) by singing how the mission of John in bringing the Lord's People *the knowledge of salvation through the remission of their sins* was all due to *the tender mercy* (διὰ σπλάγχνα ἐλέους) *of our God, who will make the Dawn visit us from on high.* This use of 'heart' (σπλάγχνα) for the divine heart of love and pity is not known to the LXX, but we have already seen an instance of it in Paul (see p. 199).

In his letter to John Milton, Sir Henry Wotton concludes: "Therefore I will commit you to the best of all securities, God's dear love." This safeguarding function of the divine love is to the front in the small manifesto of Judas as well as in the book of Revelation. In the former, as it happens, the writer begins by addressing Christians as those who *have been called, who are beloved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ* (ver. 1). God's love is linked here to election, as in the theology of Paul. The Greek of the sentence is ambiguous, and the dative Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ might mean "in Jesus Christ." But the above rendering yields a good sense, for Christians are kept as they are loved, i.e. kept as elect, although it is carefully pointed out that this involves watchfulness and moral alertness; they must *keep* themselves *within the love of God* (ver. 21), *waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ* by the use of prayer and loyal adherence to the faith and discipline of the Church. The best that the writer can wish for his friends is that *mercy, peace, and love may be multiplied* to them (ver. 2), i.e. that they may have ever fuller experiences of God's love. The fact that in a short tract like this God's love is assumed thus to be fundamental, has to be set fairly against the failure to stress this truth in other quarters.

2

Elsewhere in the literature of this section God's love is nearly always mentioned in OT quotations, where hardships are explained as the proof of God's fatherly discipline. Thus the author of Hebrews (xii. 5 f.) quotes from the free Greek version of Proverbs iii. 11, 12:

> *The Lord disciplines the man he loves,*
> *and scourges every son he receives.*

The Wisdom-literature and some other of the later books of Judaism reflect a period of suffering, when the need was felt of developing the thought of God's education and kind discipline in order to maintain faith in His goodness and love. As it happens, this is the one passage in Proverbs where such a view is stated, for elsewhere in that book the idea is that suffering is the punishment of sin. The author of Hebrews, however, puts forward the consideration which we shall meet in the Johannine literature, that the fact of a Christian being exposed to hardship proves he must be worth something to God; suffering must be understood not as an arbitrary experience inflicted casually or cruelly, but as part of God's true fatherly interest. He cannot spare men this hard phrase, since only thus can the finer qualities of character be ripened. Hence the discipline of faults and the trying hours of persecution; it is argued that these are really a mark and proof of our filial relation to God, not the reverse. *God is treating you as sons; for where is the son who is not disciplined by his father?* In the book of Revelation (iii. 19) the prophet also echoes the same proverb to encourage the Church: *I reprove and discipline those whom I love* (φιλέω).

The thought was not unfamiliar to pagan writers who were almost contemporary. Thus Seneca (*De Providentia*, i.: "bonum virum in deliciis non habet: experitur, indurat, sibi illum praeparat") pleads that God never spoils a good man by kindness, but proves him, hardens him or stiffens his fibre, and so prepares him for himself. Juvenal even more warmly explains that the gods may be safely left to answer our prayers, since they will never give what is merely pleasant but invariably what is best for us, as man is dearer to them than he is to himself (*Sat.*, x. 346–350):

> nam pro jucundis aptissima quaeque dabunt di;
> carior est illis homo quam sibi.

The strain of hardship stirred occasional doubts of God. The NT has nothing corresponding to the book of Job, but in the rougher times through which some communities were passing there were moods of questioning. *Have you forgotten the word of appeal that reasons with you as sons?* the author of Hebrews asks, in introducing the quotation from Proverbs. And James (i. 13 f.) anticipates a doubt on the part of men who wondered whether they were not handicapped by God or unfairly treated in having to face trials. *Let no one who is tried by temptation say,* '*My temptation comes from God,*' as though the responsibility for human weakness fell on God who made life too difficult for faith. James explains that it is incompatible with the divine nature to tempt anyone, and that there is no imperfect or malign endowment in our nature. *All we are given is good, and all our endowments are faultless.* God is no shifting deity who cannot be relied upon; He gives undeviating aid, *knowing no change of rising and setting.* Nor must man ascribe his errors to planetary influence, as astrological theosophy held; Christians are swayed by Him who is *the Father of the heavenly lights,* above these luminaries to whom superstition attributed so much power over destiny. This is the one passage in which the loving wisdom and justice of God are challenged, and the challenge comes from experience of severe hardship and from the ordeal of sharp trials to the faith. Against such uncertainties the absolute goodwill of God is asserted.

It is in the book of Revelation that two direct allusions to Christ's love are found. In Hebrews it is the sympathy of Christ which is the main category, but here his love is adduced in i. 5 and iii. 9. The doxology of the (*a*) former passage glories in his love on account of what he has done for Christians, and of what he makes of them: *to him who loves us* (it is the present tense, ἀγαπῶντι) *and has loosed us from our sins by shedding his blood—he has made us thereby a realm of priests for his God and Father.* The timeless love of Christ shown thus in his sacrifice calls out passionate adoration: *to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!* At the cost of his own life he has freed Christians from their sins and introduced them into a relationship of access and privilege. The (*b*) second passage (*I did love you*) is retrospective. Looking back upon the rough persecution-time, the prophet declares, men will recognize that only Christ's love enabled the Church to survive. It is the sustaining love of Christ which is here in the writer's mind.

> Careless seems the great Avenger . . . yet behind the dim unknown
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.

The book of Revelation is a tract written for a bad time, and in his opening doxology the prophet shows that he realizes where the best hope for the Church lay, in falling back upon what the Lord is, on what he had done and is doing and is to do; in a word, upon the redeeming love of Christ. It is when Christians have this vital sense of what they owe to the Lord that they become conscious of a strength which enables them to face anything for his sake. Those who sing *To him who loves us and has loosed us from our sins by shedding his blood* have the root of humble courage in them. Neither here nor in First Peter is there any effort to present a theological account of redemption such as we find in Paul. But the religious experience is the same, though the prophet has specially in view the hard hours of trouble which he fears will come to the Church, and which will call for undaunted faithfulness. Now, faithfulness depends on faith; loyalty is evoked by the Lord's sacrifice. When he describes the triumphant martyrs in heaven as having *washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb* (vii. 14), he is putting in symbolic form the truth that they owed their bliss and victory not to the shedding of their own blood but to the redemption of Christ which alone gave them strength as well as desire to suffer for the faith. It is the fundamental conception of the prophet that what will inspire moral heroism in the crisis of the faith is the conviction that Christ in love sacrificed himself for us, to carry out God's purpose. This love is also experienced as a present, living power; once indeed it manifested itself in the sacrificial death, but it is no mere memory. How this faith was sustained, we are not told. It is natural to think here and elsewhere of the eucharist; though the prophet does not mention it, there was no more moving reminder of the Lord's living love, to evoke overwhelming wonder and gratitude in the hearts of Christians. Pater's dainty picture of the Roman eucharist being celebrated under the Antonines has several unhistorical touches, but it is not fanciful when he speaks of the vivid realization of Christ's love produced by the rite in the worshippers. "What Saint Lewis of France discerned, and found so irresistibly touching, across the dimness of many centuries, as a painful thing done for love of him by one he had never seen, was to them almost as a thing of yesterday; and their hearts were whole with it" (*Marius the Epicurean*, ch. xxiii.). This would be true of the Asiatic Christians whom the prophet recalls, over half a century earlier, to the consciousness of *him who loves us*.

Two other indirect allusions to the divine love for the Church lie in the Apocalypse. (*a*) One is in the weird oracle of xx. 9, where, drawing on OT reminiscences, the prophet describes the saints besieged by the Satanic hosts as *the leaguer of the saints and the beloved City*, the idea being that of the divine love safeguarding the Church, as in iii. 9. (*b*) The other is in the description of the Church as the Bride, which is discussed below, under the Johannine interpretation (pp. 261 f.). The bridal metaphor is still applied to the Community alone. The one possible allusion to anything like such a conception, with regard to an individual, may be overheard in the regulation of 1 Timothy v. 11, 12, which prohibits young widows (i.e. under the age of sixty) being put on the list of the church's pensioners, the reason given being that *when their wanton desires alienate them from Christ, they want to marry and thus are guilty of breaking their first troth to him* (τὴν πρώτην πίστιν). Here *first troth* denotes a sort of marriage bond between Christ and the widow who took service in the church, a bond to which she pledged fidelity. This may be one source of the later " nubere deo " idea in the Church ; at anyrate it is the first indication of the idea that a special vocation might be regarded as a marriage-tie between the Lord and the individual soul. Christ would be the Bridegroom of a woman thus pledged to special service ; unless the words be taken in the more prosaic sense of an undertaking not to marry again or a promise to serve the church faithfully, when they were formally enrolled on the list of ' ecclesiastical ' widows.

The reluctance of wise Christians to think of an individual soul as the Bride of Christ is voiced by Bernard in his *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum* (e.g. lxviii. 4, lxix. 1). For all his warm personal devotion, he shrinks from allowing anyone to use this title except the Church. " Quod etsi nemo nostrum sibi arrogare praesumat, ut animam suam quis audeat sponsam Domini appellare ; quoniam tamen de Ecclesia sumus, quare merito hoc nomine et re nominis gloriatur, non immerito gloriae huius participium usurpamus. . . . Gratias tibi, Domine Jesu, qui nos carissimae Ecclesiae tuae aggregare dignatus es, non solum ut fideles essemus, sed etiam ut tibi vice sponsae in amplexus jucundos, castos aeternosque copularemur " (xii. 11).

Far more central is the vigorous though passing allusion in James (iv. 4, 5) to God's jealousy : *Wanton creatures ! do you not know that the world's friendship means enmity with God ? . . . What, do you consider this an idle word of scripture ?— ' He yearns jealously for the spirit he set within us.'* Faithfulness to God should correspond, the writer is urging, to God's loving faithfulness ; he does not hesitate to use the daring metaphor of God jealously yearning for the undivided affection of His people, and unable to brook any rival. In the OT, idolatry was resented as unfaithfulness to the Lord, who, as jealous for His rights, punishes the disloyal. James here attacks worldliness in the Church as a wanton breach of faith, and reminds his readers of the passionate love of God for them; God will resent any unfaithfulness on the part of those to whom He has given His heart; as He is love, and bound to them in a tie of love, He will assert His exclusive rights to their affection and obedience. Without calling the Church the Bride of God, the writer implies this relationship. This mention of the divine jealousy is unique in the NT, but it reflects the OT anthropomorphic idea which is implicit in the conception of the marital relation between God and His people (see above, p. 79). The contrast between this and the popular Greek notion of the jealousy of the gods depends on the different conception entertained of the divine position. To the Greeks, the gods were jealous as they spitefully resented any threatened invasion of their privileges; as when a man on earth by his wealth or power seemed to be actually encroaching on their preserves. For it was axiomatic that the gods alone had the right to unbroken bliss. Anyone who appeared to be challenging this by an exceptional run of prosperity or success must take the consequences; he is liable to be repressed and suddenly flung down, as though he were a member of "a pushing *bourgeoisie*," the gods being jealous as they maintain the privileges of their own order, "resolute to shut out mankind into the realm of vicissitude, far from participation in their own invulnerable bliss."[1] The one is the moral reaction of God against treachery and disloyalty to love; the other is the vulgar grudge of privilege against any threat to its prerogatives, the Olympian gods being intensely conscious of their own position and resentful of any human attempt to invade it from below.

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[1] Julia Wedgwood, *The Moral Ideal*, pp. 108, 109.

II

As in the teaching of Paul, so in the literature which may be grouped as the expression of what the primitive Church in general thought and felt, there are comparatively few allusions to love for God or Christ.

I

Three happen to occur in connexion with suffering. The documents are in the main addressed to churches which were exposed to social or even political interference; behind the language of epistles like First Peter and Hebrews especially we can detect the figures of Christians who were suffering—

> From the whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong.

One (*a*) is the beatitude of James (i. 12), *Blessed is the man who endures under trial* (ὑπομένει πειρασμόν); *for when he has stood the test, he will gain the crown of life which is promised to all who love him.* This love is obedient loyalty under trial; there is a reminiscence of the eschatological beatitude in Daniel xii. 12, and also, as has been already indicated (see pp. 154 f., on 1 Corinthians ii. 9) of another OT promise, where 'patience' has been here altered to 'love.' Soon the strain will be over, when fortitude is crowned by God with the honour of life eternal. And this endurance (ὑπομονῇ) is a function and proof of genuine love or devotion to God, πειρασμός denoting hardship of any kind as an opportunity for proving our mettle. The thought recurs (*b*) in ii. 5, where the writer speaks of the pious poor inheriting *the realm which God has promised to those who love him.* For poverty is one of the trials in the hard days ; in the East wealthy pagans could take legal advantage of Christians in the lower classes, as in modern India rich Hindus will bully unjustly the Christian pariahs.

(*c*) Similarly in 1 Peter i. 8 love to Christ is expressed in stedfast endurance of the strain involved by adherence to him under trial ; *you never knew him, but you love him* comes after the words upon the testing-time for faith through which the readers were passing. Peter implies that sterling faith is not a mere stoical endurance but transfused with personal affection to the Lord, who may be out of sight but is never out of reach. Here again, as in James, the eschatological outlook appears : *for the moment you do not see him, but you believe in him, and you will thrill with an unspeakable and glorious joy to obtain the outcome of your faith in the salvation of your souls.* Upon the whole, *you never knew* (εἰδότες) *him* is more likely to have been the original reading than *you never saw* (ἰδόντες) *him* ; however, the point of the saying is not really affected. These Asiatic Christians had never had any personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, such as their apostle had enjoyed, but it is implied that this is no handicap ; the inward personal devotion of the heart is independent of such a relationship.

2

Two allusions also emerge in the Pastoral Epistles, both of which contrast love for God and love for the world. The first is (*a*) in one of the passages which may well be an authentic fragment (2 Timothy iv. 8–10) : *now the crown of a good life* (τῆς δικαιοσύνης) *awaits me, with which the Lord, that just Judge, will reward me on the great Day—and not only me but all who have loved and longed for* (ἠγαπηκόσιν) *his appearance* or return at the end of the world. *Do your best to come soon to me, for Demas, in his love for* (ἀγαπήσας) *this world, has deserted me.* As we have already seen, the wrong love of Demas may imply (" instead of loving God ") an antithesis such as recurs in 1 Corinthians xvi. 13, James iv. 4–5, and, in particular, 1 John ii. 15–17. The curiously abstract turn of the other phrase probably denotes an eschatological form of expression, as though Paul meant, "those who have loved and longed for him who is to appear" or arrive soon upon this worldly scene. It is a fresh corroboration of the fact, which the Epistle to the Romans proves, that *loving God* or *loving Christ* was by no means a phrase confined to churches of the Pauline mission. The force of the perfect tense (*who have loved and longed for*) means that they have kept this up to the very end, instead of allowing the drift of material things to carry them away from such devotion. We catch the spirit of Paul Gerhardt's hymn—

Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to Thee.

Bernard (*Sermones in Cant.* xx.) pleads for love to the Lord being shown in three ways acceptable to him, by warmth of devotion, by wise understanding of what love means, and by tenacious loyalty under the strain of life. In xix. 7 he tells his monks, "Sapientia est Deus, et vult se amari non solum dulciter sed et sapienter." He then expands this counsel by adding, "Disce, O christiane, a Christo, quemadmodum diligas Christum. Disce amare dulciter, amare prudenter, amare fortiter. Dulciter, ne illecti; prudenter, ne decepti; fortiter, ne oppressi ab amore Domini avertamur."

(*b*) It is also (2 Timothy iii. 1–4) predicted that *in the last days men will be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God* (φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι), and that they will be *selfish* (φίλαυτοι). This is the only allusion that turns up to the current antithesis between φιλαυτία and unselfishness, which plays so large a rôle in Greek ethics and also in Philo. One of the worst charges Philo brings against men is that they are φίλαυτοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι (*De Profugis*, 15). In the Philonian system of religious thought, love for God as opposed to this self-love means (i) living according to reason, the divine and sovereign principle of the moral life, (ii) ecstasy or rapture, a frenzy of religious excitement, and (iii), in quieter form again, the recognition of God's good providence; whereas self-love is the cool, calculating habit of making oneself the centre of interest. In Aristotle and the Greek ethical writers generally φιλαυτία is conceited selfishness as opposed to the unselfishness which a Christian would have called brotherly love. But the NT does not employ this antithesis in the terminology of φίλαυτος and φιλόθεος. The nearest approach to it is in the pungent words of James iv. 4: *the world's friendship* (ἡ φιλία) *means enmity to God. Whoever, then, chooses to be the world's friend, turns enemy to God.* This denunciation of a worldly compromise, which divides its affection between God and the world, opposes self-gratification to self-devotion; love for God meaning devotion to His interests with a whole heart, is sharply contrasted with a temper which means for James, in everything but the actual name, what Philo meant by φιλαυτία or what the Johannine writer meant by *love of the world.*

To express this affection and allegiance, θεόφιλος was more often used in the early Church than φιλόθεος. Thus in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (iii. 2) the phrase runs: *the God-loving* (θεοφίλους) *and God-fearing* (θεοσεβοῦς) *race of Christians.* But in the primitive manual of ethical instruction for the churches, the distinctive note of the Way of Life as opposed to the Way of Death or of the World is simply stated in the old terms: *the Way of Life is this—first of all, you shall love the God who made you, secondly your neighbour as yourself* (*Didachê* i. 2).

The love of goodness also enters into the ethical ideal. One mark of degeneration (2 Timothy iii. 3) is held to be a hatred of goodness, and one essential qualification of a good bishop (Titus i. 8) is that he must be *a lover of goodness*—for, though φιλάγαθος here follows φιλόξενος and might conceivably be taken as helpful or kind, as in the Aristotelian antithesis (φιλάγαθος οὐ φίλαυτος), the broader sense of the term is much to be preferred. In *Wisdom* vii. 22, 23, as an epithet of the Spirit it appears to mean this, since it is followed by an adjective like εὐεργετικόν and also by φιλάνθρωπον.

It was reserved for a later singer of the second century to speak of a love for the Lord's holiness, however. " Love His holiness, and clothe yourselves therewith : and be without stain at all times before Him " (*Odes of Solomon* xiii.).

3

If the attitude reflected in these writings be rightly understood, it reveals a deep, trustful reverence for God, with the awe and obedience which reverence connotes. *Fear God, humble yourselves under His strong hand, call upon a Father who judges everyone impartially by what he has done*—these are characteristic words of Peter as he describes the relationship of Christians to God in heaven. When love is mentioned, it is—

> Love that breathes not without awe,
> Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer.

Neither here nor elsewhere does this true fear of God exclude trustful affection ; a writer like the author of *Barnabas* can bid his readers *love your Maker, fear your Creator, glorify him who redeemed you from death* (xix. 2), and not only is there an occasional thrill of rapture at the thought of Christ, but a new praise of God as the *Saviour of all men*, which may be a protest against Hellenistic or gnostic views. Still, so far as language goes, the religious adoration and awe of these communities is true to the spirit of Jesus himself in preferring upon the whole to talk of reverencing God the Father rather than of loving Him, since in days when temptations to apostasy and minor forms of disloyalty were rife it was felt that the surest proof of love lay in humble courage and tenacity. We expect something like the mediaeval—

O Deus ego amo te,
Nam prior tu amasti me.

Or such a turn as that in the 'Adeste Fideles' hymn—

Sic nos amantem
Quis non redamaret?

But what we get is the spirit, not the letter, of such quivering gratitude. Thus just as Peter never speaks explicitly of God loving men, so neither does he speak of Christians loving God or Christ, except in the one passage. The same holds true of Hebrews and of the other pieces of literature in this department of our survey. Whilst the data corresponds to the teaching of Jesus himself, at the same time it must be allowed that there is even less recourse to such expressions than in Paulinism. Paul's deeper view of the redeeming love of God led to larger mention of love to God in return, but although this is retained it is not developed after Paul in early Christianity till we come upon the Johannine teaching. Probably, however, the reason for the comparatively small place given here to love for God, and for the special aspect of it, is not only that the conception of God elicits reverence, honour, and humble, trustful obedience as the best response of men, but that these epistles are documents of a suffering period, when the timely features of love were courageous trust and unflinching loyalty. Boileau's couplet (*Ep.* xii. 99) expresses their spirit:

Qui fait exactement ce que ma loi commande,
A pour moi, dit ce Dieu, l'amour que je demande.

In the mediaeval analysis there were three forms of love: the contemplative or meditative, the mystical (in prayer), and the practical; the last named was shown in service and suffering. It is this aspect which is prominent in our epistles, as it was in some circles of almost contemporary Judaism,[1] where love to God was defined not only as devotion to the study of the Torah, or to the temple, or to the sabbath, but to the will of God as it imposed suffering and, if need be, martyrdom.

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[1] See W. Bacher's *Agada d. Tannaiten*, i. 282 f., 312, etc. A typical illustration is afforded by the saying (T. B. *Sabbath* 88*b*, *Joma* 23, *Gittin* 36): "Those who are humiliated without humiliating others, those who listen to abuse of themselves without retaliating, those who act from love and rejoice in suffering, to them the word applies: *those who love God are like the sun going forth in his strength*." It is a dramatic application of the phrase from the old war-song of Judges v. 31.

III

A MUCH richer crop is to be gathered from the field where brotherly love is the theme. In the contemporary teaching of Judaism love for God and love for man were organically connected by reference to Genesis v. 1: *in the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.* God loves what He created in His likeness, and therefore man must be loved by his fellow-men. Thus, for example, Rabbi Akiba taught, "Beloved is man that he was created in the Likeness: greater love was it that this was revealed to him," arguing that, e.g., murder was a diminution of the divine Likeness (see *Pirke Aboth* iii. 18). The nearest approach to this lies in the saying of James that cursing is sinful because *with the tongue we curse men made in God's likeness* (iii. 9); but the principle is not directly connected with love. Christian thought did not follow this line.

I

Beloved occurs freely as a title of Christians, in Judas, Hebrews (once, vi. 9), First Peter and Second Peter, with *my beloved brothers* three times in James. The rest of the material may be grouped under six heads.

(i) φιλαδελφία is employed frequently. In 2 Peter i. 7 the readers are told to furnish their piety (εὐσέβεια) with brotherliness (φιλαδελφία), and brotherliness with Christian love (ἀγάπη). For there might be a piety which tended to become inhuman, self-centred, and indifferent to other people, just as brotherly love might in turn be parochial, and therefore the latter requires to be supplied with Christian love for all men. In Hebrews xiii. 1 the practical duty of hospitality on the part of the Church is linked to φιλαδελφία, as it is to *love*[1] in 1 Peter iv. 8, 9. But in 1 Peter iii. 8 the range is wider: *you must have sympathy, brotherly love* (φιλάδελφοι), *compassion, and humility, never paying back evil for evil,* etc., never letting yourselves grow sullen or spiteful. The teaching of Jesus in Matthew v. 43 f. goes echoing on.

The cognate term ἀδελφότης occurs for the first and the only time in the NT at 1 Peter ii. 17: *love the brotherhood,* where the immediately preceding words, *honour all men,* indicate the tendency which we have already seen in Paulinism, to concentrate 'love' on fellow-Christians. The remarkable saying of i. 22 on *unfeigned brotherly kindness* falls to be considered later, under the heading of the Strain of Love. Meantime it is enough to chronicle a further echo of *brotherhood* in Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians* (x.): *Follow the example of the Lord, firm and unchanging in the faith, loving the brotherhood, affectionate to one another . . . despising no man* (as Peter said, dishonouring no man).

In *Paradise Lost* (xii. 581 f.) Milton puts a loose paraphrase of 2 Peter i. 5–7 into the lips of Michael as he counsels Adam—

> Only add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith;
> Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
> By name to come call'd charity, the soul
> Of all the rest; then wilt thou not be loath
> To leave this paradise, but shalt possess
> A paradise within thee happier far.

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[1] Hospitality would fall on some of the wealthier with special weight; also it might happen that some took advantage of it. Which would lead to a certain grumbling on the part of the generous-minded members. Hence *love one another . . . be hospitable to each other, and do not grudge it*—ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ, the very phrase used by the writer of the *Psalms of Solomon* (v. 15), when he declares that *if a man repeats his kindness* ἄνευ γογγυσμοῦ, *you might well marvel*

But this is not the exact point of the Petrine passage. Love is indeed the climax of the series, and yet the whole character thus developed is said to make for the inward understanding of God. *For as these qualities* (all the seven) *exist and increase with you, they render you active and fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Church is told that only by living with him and for him in the practice of such virtues can they learn him, and thus enter the heavenly paradise (*you will thus be richly furnished with the right of entry into the eternal realm of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*). It is the Christian version of the Hellenistic view, familiar in Philo, that immortality comes through acquaintance with the essence of the deity. But it is in John, not here, that love is made the soul and centre of this knowledge.

(ii) The Epistle of James and the Pauline letters are theologically apart, but both reiterate the Rule of Love laid down by Jesus. In James ii. 8 (*if you really fulfil the royal law laid down by scripture, 'You must love your neighbour as yourself,' well and good*), the writer means the royal law as the supreme law for the Realm of God. Those who as regenerate own His authority or Reign over their lives are bidden obey this law, and the argument of the context is that any servile deference to the rich at the expense of the poor within the Church is a breach of such law, since the essence of the law is brotherly love. The reminiscence is of Leviticus xix. 15 f., where the injunction to love one's neighbour is preceded by the strict warning—

Thou shalt not be partial to a poor man,
Nor defer to a powerful man.

But James in the sequel broadens the scope of his appeal from a warning against class-feeling to the general field of

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at his achievement. Hermas (*Simil.* ix. 24. 2) commends those who had *always a heart* (mercy or pity) *for everyone, assisting everyone from what they had earned, and doing it without upbraiding.*

human intercourse. *Speak, act, as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom*, this inward law which is far from being lax, *for the judgment* at the end *will be merciless to the man who has* on earth *shown no mercy* to his fellows in the Community. Ill fares the pitiless, selfish life at the last judgment, for all its creed and fine words about love that are no more than words! Harshness and the unbrotherly spirit are thus pronounced sins that exclude a Christian from heaven, as they had been by Jesus in other terms.

> Oh, if our brother's blood cry out at us,
> How shall we meet thee who hast loved us all,
> Thee whom we never loved, not loving him?

This is the other side of the promise that a loving life, for all its defects, will be accepted at the end. For Christianity was a religion. The thought, why urge belief as though faith in God were needful to kind living ?, did not present itself to the writer. Even the finer humanitarianism of the Stoics had a religious context, and James does not conceive the possibility of goodness without God. The trouble he fears in the Church is rather a spurious form of belief in God which sat loose to the moral obligations of goodness or brotherly love.

(iii) The service of love is particularly prominent in two passages from Hebrews. (*a*) In vi. 10, love to God is shown in the service of others: *God will not forget what you have done, or the love you have shown for his sake in ministering to the saints.* These people had been willing to make sacrifices for their fellow-Christians. Only, the apostle adds, much as Paul does in Philippians i. 9, that he hopes they will be as keen in realizing the range and grasp of their religion as in its practical application (vers. 11, 12), since it is only by a sustained and thoughtful interest in the deeper truths of the faith that this life can be secure. Charity and kindness are of value in the sight of God, he argues; they may be done from a purely disinterested motive, but they will not be overlooked by God, however the recipients may fail in gratitude. Nevertheless, he would have these kind-hearted, generous Christians take the trouble to think out the significance of the Lord Jesus for their faith and hope. This counsel was all the more needful in view of the mystery-cults, which did not make such a severe demand upon the mind of their adherents. "You have to experience an emotion, not to get instruction" (*οὐ μαθεῖν τι δεῖ, ἀλλὰ παθεῖν*), said Aristotle about these rites. It is the one-sided verdict of an intellectual man, but it had some justification. To go through certain sacramental acts or to recite some more or less obscure formula was generally sufficient. Christians who were familiar with this type of religion might well be tempted to assume that Christianity involved as little exercise of the mind, and this helps to explain the care with which responsible leaders urge, as here, the function of applying the mind to the contemplation of what the simple creed contained. *It is my heart's desire that each of you would prove equally keen upon realizing your full hope* (all that is involved in your hope as Christians) with a sustained interest. Great as is the service of Christian love, it requires an instructed Christian faith, for which indeed it is a vital preparation. In charity and hospitality these people had excelled. But it is a fresh proof of the spirit which actuates the responsible writers of the NT that the author of Hebrews reminds them of the truth that their religion is a much deeper thing than friendliness or social helpfulness. The supreme law of God might be love. But there was still need for Christians sharing the spirit of the psalmist: *Quomodo dilexi legem tuam, Domine? tota die meditatio mea est.*

This conviction that whilst the revelation of God produces fellowship, it leads thereby or ought to lead to a fuller insight into the truth of His being, is put in the *Odes of Solomon* (xii.), where 'love and concord' come from the Word or Revelation: "For the dwelling place of the Word is man; and its truth is love. Blessed are they who by means thereof have understood everything, and have known the Lord in truth." In modern times no better statement of the whole subject is accessible than the twentieth chapter of William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. His treatise on *The Spirit of Love* suffers from too much argumentation about the philosophical principles of the subject.

(*b*) In x. 24 *let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds* is a counsel for the common life of the Church. It is implied that only common worship and a strong sense of fellowship can inspire this unselfish care for one another. In vi. 10 the author had reminded them that love cannot be left an untrained instinct ; here he lays upon them the duty of providing for the practice of that instinctive affection, i.e. for an active, attractive Christian life inspired by mutual love. The approach to God, opened up by Christ, must be one of faith, hope, and love. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in absolute assurance of faith . . . let us hold the hope we avow* (in our baptismal confession) *without wavering, and let us consider* (keep our eyes open) *how to stir up one another to love and good deeds* by definite exhortations, by good example, but at anyrate by avoiding anything like a false superiority to common worship and fellowship, as though these were superfluous. What the writer has in mind is suggested by his next words—*not ceasing to meet together, as is the habit of some, but admonishing one another*. This call to fellowship tallies with the counsel of Hillel, " Separate not thyself from the congregation, and trust not in thyself until the day of thy death " (*Pirke Aboth* ii. 5). It was specially needful for the early Church, when to stand aloof from fellowship meant a serious risk of losing touch with faith altogether. Since the sphere of love was the membership of the Church, any individualistic tendency spelt a danger of losing sight of the very people who needed one's love ; for one's own sake as well as for theirs it was imperative to join hands, and to frequent the humble gatherings where life touched life with needs and wants. The author of Hebrews would have stared and shuddered, had anyone ventured to suggest that the organized fellowship of the Church was an unfortunate and risky necessity. For him worship and the cultus embodied what was vital in the living faith of the Community, because they represented the living presence of the Lord and thereby held members together in the bond of love to him and one another.

The same point is driven home by the counsel in 2 Timothy ii. 22 f.: *shun the lusts of youth and aim at integrity, faith, love, and peace, in the company of* (μετά) *those who invoke the Lord out of a pure heart*, for the closing words μετά κτλ refer to the whole of the preceding injunction instead of being an explanation of the sphere of *peace* alone. It is not in the company of the supercilious errorists that one can hope to reach the Christian level of character, but only by associating with the like-minded who share the true faith of Christ; and though the effort has to be made by each individual, it requires the common spirit of the fellowship in order to be successful.

(iv) All this, however, opens up into the fourth aspect of our subject, viz. the strain of love, which stirs two profound words. In Revelation ii. 4 the prophet, speaking in the name of the Lord, tells the Christians of Ephesus, *you have given up loving one another as you did at first.* For ἀγάπη here is mutual love, as in Matthew xxiv. 12, where *the love of many shall wax cold* is a prediction of brotherly love cooling as times become hard and sore. The strain proves too much for the initial affection and loyalty of the group: some grow irritable and censorious. In the message to Ephesus, however, the reason for the slackening of brotherly love is not quite the same. At Ephesus there was a strain; it was one of the trying times in which temper is apt to get the better of kindness and charitable feeling, but the strain was created by the very activities of the church. The prophet has all praise for its orthodoxy, its zeal, its missionary energy, and its patient endurance of hardship. It has a fine record of zeal and tenacity, he freely grants. The one thing he has against it is this failure to maintain the loving spirit, a failure evidently due to the very keenness of the church. Brotherly love had been sapped by the intensity of its zeal. Probably the liberal and the puritan parties had been at issue ; impatience had been shown ; the concern for true doctrine had led to intolerance ; and thus the mischief had been done.

Such a lack of love the prophet regards as damning. *Repent and act as you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand.* So far from brotherly love being an extra, the absence of which may be condoned, in presence of many other excellent qualities such as missionary zeal and orthodox belief, the prophet asserts that it is vital. Not the well-being but the very being of the church depends on this spirit. The alternative is—brotherly love or extinction. It is one of the most searching words upon love in the NT, and it marks a point at which modern Christianity has departed widely from the Christianity of the NT, more widely perhaps than at any other.

" 'Tis the general complaint of these times, and perhaps of those past, that charity grows cold ; which I perceive most verified in those which do most manifest the fires and flames of zeal." What Sir Thomas Browne marked in the seventeenth century (*Religio Medici*, ii. 4) was the burden of the prophet's warning in the first. The Ephesian church had indeed shown no weak indulgence towards itinerant evangelists of doubtful character and still more doubtful views ; they had evinced a zealous concern for sound doctrine and discipline, as well as unwavering stedfastness to the faith. But a hard, supercilious temper had crept in, under cover of these very virtues, and had started a miserable feud, in the course of which Christian charity was suffering.

The only church praised by the prophet for its brotherly love is that of Thyatira ; *I know your doings, your love and* *loyalty* (πίστιν) *and service and patient endurance* (ii. 19). 'Faith' here has its special connotation of loyalty, displayed under a strain upon faithfulness to God, whilst brotherly love is singled out for special commendation. Indeed the one criticism of the prophet is that the local church has been too lax in permitting certain practices on the part of some members; the Thyatiran Christians are blamed for having been too ready to tolerate those who sought to be on hearty good terms with local guilds which the prophet pronounces compromising to Christian purity. This is the reverse side of the danger noted at Ephesus. The latter church drew the line so eagerly and sharply that it lost its inward love; at Thyatira love showed itself in care for the poor and sick (service) and in loyal adherence to the faith under difficulties, but with a warmth which was not sufficiently strict. They were broad-minded, but they would have been all the better for a dash of saving intolerance.

The companion passage is in 1 Peter i. 22 f.: *Now that your obedience to the Truth has purified your souls for a brotherly love* (φιλαδελφίαν ἀνυπόκριτον) *that is sincere, love one another heartily* (ἐκ καρδίας) *and steadily* (ἐκτενῶς). The ἁγιασμός or purifying of life towards God, the hallowing and consecration of which he has been just speaking (15–21), involves towards men the attitude of love, which sums up all the duties of a faith thus purified. The life of these Christians had been stamped and set apart for God by their adhesion to the gospel, the gospel being called the *Truth* or the true religion, the revealed and real will of God, which involves a real life, a brotherly love which has no pretence about it—ἀνυπόκριτον (see above, on Romans xii. 9). *So love one another*, the apostle continues, ἐκ καρδίας, not with an impulsive affection,[1] nor with one that acts by fits and starts, but ἐκτενῶς. This steady affection reappears in iv. 7 f., where it denotes an unremitting spirit of kindness and helpfulness, which is above caprice and whims. *Above all, be keen to love one another* (ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ). But in i. 22 f. the apostle shows that such an affection is no sensuous product. " All genuine love is a principle and is founded upon the perception of a permanent relation, as opposed to the self-pleasing, casual, and short-lived impulses which have but an imperfect right to the name of love " (Hort). The truth which Peter is urging here is really the same as that implied by James (see above, p. 127) in his stress on the supreme law of brotherly love, which, so far from being a mere ethical counsel, is rooted in the regenerate nature ; it is those who have been *born by the Word of the truth* (i. 18 f.) who are expected, in virtue of their new instincts, to live up to the law of love. So Peter appeals to those who have been *born anew* to love one another steadily ; the one source of so persistent a temper is the regenerate nature, as it is fulfilled. Hence he proceeds (23 f.) to plead for this new nature being given full play ; you are *purified for brotherly love*, but, as it is a moral task, *love one another*. Thus and thus only can Christians address themselves to this new and high vocation of abjuring such ugly vices in the community as *malice* (ill-feeling), guile (all that is deceitful and underhand), *insincerity*, *envy*, *and slander of every kind*.

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[1] This is the meaning of the dialogue in John xxi. 15 f. Will Peter's impulsive affection transmute itself into a spiritual devotion, and into a devotion which, because it holds the Lord dear, will enter into the lives of his people?

Here the absence of motive-mongering is noticeable. Marcus Aurelius (vii. 22) gives four reasons for such kindly love. " It is man's prerogative to love even those who err. This is possible if you reflect (i) that they are kin to you (i.e. human beings like yourself), and (ii) that they sin merely through ignorance and involuntarily, also (iii) that you and they will soon be dead, and (iv) above all, that the offender did not really hurt you, since your ruling faculty was made no worse than it was before." The Christian ethic of forgiveness, on the other hand, does not pardon on the ground that the offence is slight, or that nothing better could be expected of human creatures, or that it is not worth while to resent or deplore the failings of the race. Pity may become as contemptuous as pride, indeed, if it is no more than the spirit which says, in face of a moral breakdown on the part of some fellow-man, 'Poor creature! But what more could be expected of you?'

(v) The saying about 'love covering a multitude of sins' is a further contribution to the analysis of brotherly love. It occurs twice, in 1 Peter iv. 8 and James v. 20, though love is only mentioned in the former.

In the latter passage it is said that a Christian who reclaims another, instead of giving him up as hopeless, a man *who brings back a sinner from the error of his way saves his soul from death and hides a host of sins*. Whose sins? Plainly the sins of the Christian who does this saving work. It is a popular way of saying, "That will atone for a good deal." To have 'sins hidden' is, in Semitic metaphor, to have them forgiven (Psalm xxxii. 1), and the idea is that so meritorious an action will atone for a number of misdeeds and shortcomings in the life of the Christian teacher or evangelist. This forgiving and redeeming love which moves a man to win back an erring fellow-Christian is a service which the loving God will take into account in judging the man's personal demerits.

The OT word of which this is a reminiscence is Proverbs x. 12:

Hate stirs up strife
But love covers all transgressions—

meaning that the loving temper does not rake up or gloat over other people's faults. This is indeed the thought of love covering all things (στέγει πάντα), being *slow to expose*, in 1 Corinthians xiii. 7, and some take it as the sense of the NT words in James as well as in Peter. Curiously enough, the saying does not come through the LXX, which renders the Hebrew of Proverbs quite differently. The second interpretation, however, is expressed in the *Testament of Joseph* (xvii. 2): *Love one another, then, and with patience hide one another's faults.* Yet it is not a sense which suits the context in James, nor even in Peter. No doubt, in the latter case (*be keen to love one another, for love hides a host of sins*) it might be relevant to show that to be keen about loving one another implies that Christians do not talk about the sins of their fellows glibly or expose them needlessly. *Be keen to love one another, for* (this is how love works) *love hides a host of sins*, i.e. preferring to pass them over, if it can, rather than dwell upon them in public. But it gives a better sense to take the words as they must certainly be taken in James; the brotherly love which is keen and true, charged with an intense sense of personal responsibility for the erring, as it flows from love to Christ, "may be regarded as a kind of secondary atonement." A great deal is forgiven to a loving heart.

The eschatological setting of both sayings (cf. James v. 9, 1 Peter iv. 7: *the end of all is near*) suggests that the writers are thinking of the imminent judgment to be passed on Christians, a judgment which is measured by their brotherly love. It is the same estimate as we shall meet later in 1 John iv. 17, 18.

(vi) A special allusion to charity as sacrificial (on the lines of Philippians iv. 18) occurs in Hebrews xiii. 16, where, after bidding his readers offer the sacrifice of praise to God, the author adds, *Do not forget beneficence and charity* (εὐποιίας καὶ κοινωνίας) *either; these are the kind of sacrifices that are acceptable to God*, not sacrifices of animals, as in Jewish and pagan ritual. There was need to remind some readers of this duty, for charity in the Jewish ritual was connected with the sacrifices; in dropping the latter Christians are warned not to forget the task of devising an equivalent method for the regular support of the poor and needy. The conception of charity as sacrifice became prominent in Judaism after the fall of the Temple in A.D. 70. The author of Hebrews does not attach atoning merit to almsgiving, but he urges the careful practice of charity as a sacrifice befitting a spiritual religion like Christianity. A saying attributed to Simon the Just (third century B.C.) declares that "the world rests upon three things, the Torah, the temple-worship, and charity" (or acts of love).[1] Here it is noticeable that *κοινωνία*, the term for 'fellowship,' is used as by Paul (2 Corinthians ix. 13 f.) for 'contributions,' so closely was charity bound up with the tie of Christians in their common life. The practice of offering such contributions at the eucharist or love-feast was probably useful in preserving the regularity of the charities and also in safeguarding them against becoming formal.

(vii) The Pastoral Epistles furnish a special group of sayings in this connexion.

Thus, Christian slaves are not to take liberties with their masters, simply because the latter happen to be Christians also; *they must be all the better servants because those who get the good of their service are believers and beloved* (1 Timothy vi. 2). The duty of Christian slaves towards pagan masters has been urged (ver. 1); they must be perfectly respectful, not impelled to give themselves airs on account of their new faith, and to discredit the Church by insubordination. Now, the corresponding duty is urged in the case of slaves who have Christian masters. It is a wise word against presumptuousness. The fact that the masters belong to the Church as *beloved* is an additional reason why slaves, who happen to be fellow-members of the Church, should be respectful and dutiful to them, instead of allowing any consciousness of spiritual equality before God to breed insolence.

The definition of 2 Timothy i. 7: *God has given us a spirit of power and love and discipline*, refers specially to the vocation of the ministry. *Power* is capacity to fulfil its duties, as opposed to the spirit of constitutional *timidity* which shrinks from hardship or any unpleasant responsibility; it lifts one over a sense of ineffectiveness and inability. *Love* is not a dreamy emotion but at once the inspiring force of the service and the check upon power (as in 1 Corinthians xvi. 14). *Discipline* (σωφρονισμός) is the self-discipline which enables a man to control himself, in view of the commanding laws of the God in whose service he is engaged; it is the manly training of vigour and of devotion alike.

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[1] *Pirke Aboth* i. 2.

Normally, faith and love appear in the train of grace. The juxtaposition of love in 2 Timothy iii. 10, 11 is sufficient to show that its special quality here is that of devoted endurance, of affection proved by loyalty and stedfast courage: *you have followed my . . . faith, my patience, my love, my stedfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings,* etc. Again, in Titus ii. 2, *faith, love, and stedfastness* (ὑπομονή) are associated as in 2 Thessalonians iii. 5, while in ver. 4 we have another of the rare allusions to natural affection: *that the young women may be trained to love their husbands and their children.* In 1 Timothy i. 5, there is an echo of the truth which Peter urges in 1 Peter i. 22 f. (see above), viz. that the outcome of God's working in the Christian life is brotherly love. It is put thus: *the aim of the Christian* παραγγελία (i.e. the authoritative, moral discipline of the faith) *is the love that springs from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith.* It is the same emphasis upon single-mindedness and sincerity which has been remarked more than once already in our survey; but the main contrast, as the context shows, is between mutual love and the debating, speculative spirit which does good to no one in the Community, the empty, argumentative discussion of religious novelties which leave faith untouched and merely excite the mind. Finally, the connexion of faith and love is marked in 1 Timothy i. 14: *the grace of our Lord flooded my life along with the faith and* *love that Christ Jesus inspires* (τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), in vi. 11, and in 2 Timothy i. 13, as well as in Titus iii. 15: *salute those who love* (φιλοῦντας) *us in the faith.* It is with such passages in mind, perhaps, that Ignatius writes: *faith is the beginning, love the end, and when these two are united it is—God! All else follows in their train and leads to perfection* (*Eph.* xiv. 1).

This conviction that brotherly love was the one means of reaching a complete life here and of attaining bliss in the next world recurs persistently, from Hebrews x. 24 f. to Clement of Rome (l. 2, 3), who appeals to the quarrelsome Corinthians, *Let us beg and beseech of God's mercy that we may be found in love, free from any human partisanship, free from blame. All the generations of men have passed away, from Adam to the present day; but those perfected in love by God's grace hold their place among the pious who shall be disclosed when the Realm of Christ arrives.* It is the thought of Ephesians iv. 15, 16, and of Revelation ii. 4, that no church has any prospect of stability or chance of existence in the sight of God if it neglects brotherly love. Therefore, *if we do the will of the Father . . . we shall obtain eternal life* is a counsel naturally followed by the exhortation, *let us love one another, that we may all enter the realm of God* (2 Clement viii., ix.).

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Matthew Arnold puts this wistful cry into the lips of Obermann:

Oh! had I lived in that great day,
  How had its glory new
Fill'd earth and heaven, and caught away
  My ravish'd spirit too!
No thoughts that to the world belong
  Had stood against the wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
  From Christ's then open grave.

Yet, as our survey has shown, the primitive Christians do not seem to have spoken very much of love. It is rather hope or enthusiasm which characterizes the movement. For example, in the book of Acts once and once only does the term *beloved* occur (xv. 25, in the church's letter which alludes in passing to *our beloved Paul and Barnabas*), and the term ἀγάπη never occurs at all.[1] The qualities of love are evident, in the mission-enterprises, in the mutual patience and forbearance shown in a crisis like that of Acts vi. or xv., in practical charity, and in the courage and joy displayed throughout the story. These are practical expressions of the spirit of love at work in the fellowship of the disciples, but the language of love is strangely absent from the record. Towards God, they spoke of themselves commonly as believers or saints (ἅγιοι, consecrated by Him) ; towards one another, as brothers. Fellowship (κοινωνία) is more common than ' love.'

On the other hand, two outward expressions of love came into existence. One is (*a*) the holy kiss, exchanged by the primitive Christians, who felt they were members of a real family. The naive consciousness of belonging to the Household of the Father led them to adopt this practice of kissing one another. *Salute one another with a kiss of love* (1 Peter v. 14). Paul's term for it is *a holy kiss* (1 Thessalonians v. 26, 1 Corinthians xvi. 20, 2 Corinthians xiii. 12, Romans xvi. 16), distinguishing it as a sacred kiss from the ordinary Oriental kiss of courtesy with which a host might welcome a guest (Luke vii. 45) or with which friends might part (Acts xx. 37). The practice prevailed long in worship. Tertullian observes at the end of the second century that no prayer was complete apart from the kiss which followed in the congregation (*De Oratione*, 18). But abuses were already creeping in. Athenagoras (*Supplicatio*, 32) cites a prohibition against anyone giving a second kiss, since that implied a sensuous delight in the action; "the kiss ought to be given with the utmost care, since, if the least defiling thought enters in, it excludes us from eternal bliss." Clement of Alexandria is aghast at the loud smacking of kisses that was to be heard in some churches. Eventually, as the churches increased in size, and the smaller homely fellowships of the primitive age were less practicable, the kiss was restricted; men now only kissed men, and women women. Finally even this had to be abandoned, upon the whole. But in the first flush of the Church's life, this hearty spontaneous kiss expressed the brotherly love of the members in a social, naive fashion which for the time being was healthy and natural.

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[1] This rather tells in favour of the authenticity of Luke's allusions to love in the Third Gospel ; apparently it was not one of his favourite terms, which, it might be argued, he read back sometimes into the primitive evangelic tradition.

Often the love-kiss was revived, particularly in small, enthusiastic sects. That shrewd saint John Bunyan found it among the Ranters in seventeenth-century England, and thought it most indecorous; he protests that he never yielded to this practice (*Grace Abounding*, 315). "Some indeed urged the holy kiss; but then I asked why they made baulks? Why they did salute the most handsome [women], and let the ill-favoured go?"

The NT, however, contains no mention of any such abuses of the love-kiss. On the other hand, the only two plain allusions to the second practical expression of love are both drawn out by scandals. For 'love' or 'the love' was given as a title to a common meal of the communities (*b*), at which the members periodically gathered. This agapê or love-feast was an even more characteristic expression of brotherhood than the kiss. It was a charity-supper, not unlike the feasts in the Greek guilds; the members of the community met to seal their fellowship, in true Oriental fashion, by eating and drinking together. Probably, if we may trust Tertullian (*Apol.* xxxix.), it got its name from ἀγάπη because it was the outward expression of the inward cohesion and brotherly love which marked the little group. Though it is not named in references like Acts ii. 42, 46, it evidently was associated with the eucharist, as in the church of Corinth (1 Corinthians xi. 17 f.), since the abuses censured there point to a social meal of religious character. When John substitutes a common meal for the eucharist, at the last supper, he may be thinking of the agapê in some form. Ignatius seems to call both the eucharist and this meal by the common name of *agapê*, in his letter to the Smyrniote church (viii. 2 : *it is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or to hold a love-feast*), though the two were eventually separated. The term recurs in the second century, e.g. in the *Epistle of the Apostles* (xv. : *when you have carried out the memorial made of me and the love-feast*). Tertullian's Latin equivalent is ‘ dilectio.’ But the only mention of the communal feast by name in the NT is in Judas's pungent manifesto (12), where he denounces the high-flying errorists who advocated an Inner Light which dispensed with some moral considerations. He assails them as perverse creatures who were not only unprincipled but forward and self-indulgent. *These men are stains on your love-feasts ; they have no qualms about carousing in your midst*, enjoying themselves riotously at what is an unselfish gathering of the Household, where they attend to no one except themselves ; *they look after none but themselves*, greedy, grasping characters that they are! Judas is indignant that by such behaviour, like that which St. Paul had rebuked at Corinth, these errorists should prove a spot and blot on the white purity of the ideal love-feast.

They look after none but themselves is a rendering of ἑαυτοὺς ποιμαίνοντες (literally, shepherding themselves), which sounds like an echo of Ezekiel's blame for the unworthy ‘ shepherds ’ or rulers of Israel (xxxiv. 8), who *cared nothing about My flock, but fed themselves instead of feeding My flock*, like the worldly clergy in Milton's *Lycidas*—

> Of other care they little reckoning make
> Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,

In 2 Peter ii. 13 the original reading ἀπάταις was changed into ἀγάπαις, through harmonizing tendencies perhaps, although such linguistic confusions can be traced in the LXX; to the instances cited by Nestle (*Marginalien*, 57 f.) add 2 Chronicles xviii. 2 and *Judith* ix. 10. The rise and vogue of the primitive love-feast is by no means clear; good statements of the problem are to be found in Hort and Mayor's edition (1902) of *Clement of Alexandria, Seventh Book of the Stromateis* (Appendix C, pp. 371–384) and in Leclercq's article in Cabrol's *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, i. 775 f. (1907). According to some scholars, the saying from the *Gospel of the Hebrews* (see above, p. 100) contains an allusion to the *agapê*; i.e. 'never be glad except when you meet your brothers at the love-feast.'

There are two later uses of ἀγάπη in this church-connexion for which the NT contains no exact precedent. One is the personification which occurs in Ignatius (e.g. in *Philad.* xi., etc.: *the love of the brothers at Troas salutes you*); the other, also formed by Ignatius, is the identification of a bishop's pastoral concern for the Church with the loving concern of Christ, as when Ignatius writes to the Trallian church (vi.): *I beseech you then (yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ).*

. . . . .

These documents, drawn from different quarters of the Church, and representing a period of over sixty years, thus make an impression which in its general outline corresponds upon the whole to what has been already traced in Paulinism. The theological interpretation of love is less sharp, but the moral implicates are remarkably similar. So is the nexus between brotherly love and the consciousness of love divine. It is not always put as Paul had put it, but it is assumed as fundamental. Christianity, as we see it in these documents, is a religious movement, which is distinguished by its devotion to the divine Son of God. In that age thousands still sought individual guidance by recourse to oracles such as those of the Sybil at Erythrae or of Apollo at Claros, whilst others frequented popular cults which promised redemption from the fettering flesh. The NT religion offered to the one guidance, not in the shape of verbal messages from God but as direction inspired by a divine revelation in the personality of Jesus Christ, who had manifested love as the royal law for life. To the other it afforded a fellowship in the Church, i.e. in the Family or Household which was a unity over all the earth, embodied locally in particular congregations but essentially one and open to all men. This Community was ruled by Jesus the crowned King or Lord, who had not only spoken of love but lived it out, and who inspired it as the vital principle of his fellowship. From his Spirit men gained insight into the moral obligations which came up and laid strong hands on life, when love was regarded as the guiding principle. They caught the temper of this new affection, and were inspired to work it out; their imagination was stirred and their conscience held to its task by his revelation; they saw in his company what had to be done and even how to do it. On the one hand, the supreme duty of this love was more than a series of particular injunctions; on the other, it was an inward code bound up with a redeeming action of God which had created a fellowship.

The one saying of Jesus in the NT outside the gospels is that preserved in Acts xx. 35, where Luke represents Paul as reminding the Ephesian Christians of what the Lord had said about giving. *Remember the words* (evidently a well-known class of sayings, from which this is selected) *of the Lord Jesus, who said, 'To give is happier than to get.'* This rings more true than the majority of the so-called agrapha, which are frequently self-conscious or exaggerated in style and thought. It is significant that it should bear upon the loving duty of charity. Fortunately Luke remembered it, though for some reason he did not include it in his Gospel. This beatitude, like that of James (i. 12), is linked to love, and claims the authority of Jesus for one aspect of kindly help. In the wider aspect of the matter, the impulse and justification of love is sought in the full revelation of God through Christ, where love for the undeserving wakens love even in the unloving, and turns that into adoring gratitude towards the Lord himself. This involves the duty of seeing others in the light of Christ's love, through the eyes of the new nature created in us by him. The result is an overcoming of old prejudices and antipathies, and an emancipation from suspicion and distrust, from rancour and revenge, with a positive effort to serve others for the highest ends. In the primitive Church all this is represented, though not always in exactly the theological form given to it by Paul.

PART D

THE JOHANNINE INTERPRETATION

" L'unique objet de l'Ecriture est la charité." Pascal's saying certainly applies to the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John. Here indeed all the three aspects of Christian love are more fully developed. For our purpose it does not much matter who wrote the Fourth Gospel, or whether the same writer wrote the First Epistle or the two smaller ones. All four writings come from the same group or circle, and their divergencies are nothing as compared to the common spirit which dominates their outlook on the Christian faith. In their pages we discover the three elements of Christian love richly treated ; each is definitely interpreted, often along fresh lines, and all three are fused into a remarkable unity.

I

FOR the first time the supreme definition is offered: *God is love* (1 John iv. 16): i.e. Love as well as Spirit and Light. This is not an abstract reflection upon the divine nature, much less an intuition of some inward light on an eternal unity, but a deduction from the revelation of God in the life and career of Jesus Christ. It is visible against the background of a serious moral situation. *Love lies in this, not in our love for him but in his love for us—in the sending of his Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (1 John iv. 10). As in Paul's interpretation, this is related to human nature, not to Nature. 'God is love' is not the clue to the origin of the world, but to the moral bliss of man. John is not thinking of a pervasive love-principle in the universe. There is no attempt to explain creation from the principle of divine love, and we are not treated to any speculations about the essence of the divine being requiring to pour itself out in the creation of finite beings as the object of its inherent love. These may be relevant deductions of a Christian philosophy, but for John the revelation of God as Love is not an intuition or obvious inference from observation of the organic universe; it is only evident to those who see God acting in Jesus Christ's person and mission.

Anyone can see this, irrespective of birth and nationality, it is further claimed. Such love knows no barriers of race, for *God loved the world* of men when He took action thus. Hence the exultant confidence of the words in 1 John iii. 1 (*think what a love the Father has for us, in letting us be called 'children of God'*) means that the Church was now conscious of possessing what the Jews had monopolized for their national religion. Rabbi Akiba's contemporary claim was: "Blessed are Israel, to be called children of God; still greater love was it, to let them know they were called children of God (Deuteronomy xiv. 1)." This saying, cited in *Pirke Aboth* (iii. 22), illustrates the background of the Johannine word, though the conviction that God's love was now manifested in its reality to the world-wide Church had been already held, as we have seen, all over Christendom from the very start.

I

In the well-known words *God loved the world so dearly* (οὕτω) *that he gave up* (ἔδωκεν, or, as Paul had said, παρέδωκεν) *his only* (μονογενῆ) *Son, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life, instead of perishing* (John iii. 16), we have the Johannine conception of salvation (ver. 17); love imparts an eternal reality of life, without which human existence perishes. Instead of emphasizing redemption as the forgiveness of sins, the evangelist concentrates here upon the positive aspect of the impartation of life. He had no longer the problem of the Jewish Law to deal with; hence the antithesis of sin and righteousness recedes before that of death and life. Nevertheless, in the First Epistle he develops the thought of God forgiving sins, and it is to this interest that we owe the association of divine love with *propitiation*, a distinctively Johannine term, which recurs twice in the First Epistle: *if anyone does sin, we have an advocate* (παράκλητον) *with the Father in Jesus Christ the just* (δίκαιον); *he is himself the propitiation* (αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν) *for our sins* (ii. 1); *this is how the love of God has appeared* (ἐφανερώθη) *for us, by God sending his only Son into the world, so that by him we might live. Love lies in the sending of his Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (iv. 9, 10). There is no antithesis between love and propitiation, any more than between love and righteousness, in the Pauline or the Johannine scheme. *Propitiation* is a sacrificial term, used by John alone, and on both occasions in close connexion with the legal term (παράκλητος). But John's mind is neither sacrificial (in the strict sense of the term) nor legal; he is merely employing such terms in order to explain that the alienation between God and sinful man had been overcome because God desired it to be overcome. Propitiation does not mean any change in His attitude or purpose, for He loves the world of humanity—He sends His Son to be the propitiation. It is a proof, it is *the* proof, of His love, that He thus inspires the mission of Christ. And Christ *is* the propitiation. The allusion is not to a purely historical fact, but to the lasting relationship; the words imply that what the incarnate and risen Christ stands for, what he effects as the living Lord, is this constant cleansing and purging of human life in the Church fellowship from whatsoever would alienate it from God. In other words, the divine love had to deal with human sin, and when John wishes to speak of the saving work of Christ in this respect he uses *propitiation*, intending by that to suggest 'the means of forgiveness.' Or, as he can put it, *the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin*, from the stain of what Dante called 'the deceitful world' and its soiling fascinations—

> *dal mondo fallace*
> *Il cui amor molte anime deturpa.*

The renewing and regenerating force in human life is this divine love in its self-sacrifice. The appeal of it induces men to confess their sins and turn to God, repudiating their lower selves and finding real life with Him in the true experience and practice of love as the antithesis to hatred and malice and the evil bitterness of the world. At the same time this is conceived as more than a moral change, induced by the impression made by Christ upon the conscience. The writer is careful to explain that *he is the propitiation for our sins and also for the whole world*; he devoted himself for the sake of his people as priest and victim (John xvii. 19), thereby consecrating them to God. This sacrificial truth is not indeed so clearly argued as it is in Paul, since sin in the Johannine theology tends to be more privative than positive; but it is there. Christ *draws all men to himself* not simply by the attraction of his Spirit but through a sacrificial action, culminating in the resurrection and glorification of the Son, so that thereby believing men receive a revelation of God which heals and blesses life with real and lasting power. What is uppermost is the thought of love in vicarious suffering, through which a true order of things enters the world, a vital relationship with God which is first made possible through the entrance of the Son into this world of corruption and darkness. When John calls this *propitiation*, he is thinking of the result gained; it is only gained through a serious dealing with human sin on the part of God, but what preoccupies his mind is the blissful outcome of this dealing, just as in the references to ransom or emancipation which occur earlier in the NT the fundamental idea is not 'from whom' but 'for what' one is ransomed, not to whom the price is paid but to whom the ransomed or emancipated now belongs. The same focus is preserved in the Johannine idea of propitiation, for this saving action also is carried out in the transient order of things, and yet possesses an abiding value; it also looks to the new relationship between God and men thus attained.

As this new relationship is one of love, and produced by love divine, the antithesis is naturally selfishness. It is the sense of this which may serve to explain the reading of Christ's life in the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus does not come into such close touch with taxgatherers and sinners as in the synoptic tradition; the typical figures are Nathanael, Nicodemus, and the Greeks, rather than the woman of Samaria—and even she is not like the sinful women of the synoptic stories. This predilection may be connected with the comparative absence of emphasis upon sin and repentance in the Johannine interpretation, but it is possible to attribute it to a different conception of human need and evil, as though the writer was thinking of men and women, often of a good moral character, who nevertheless are weary of self and require a new centre for life, something to take them out of themselves, something, as Mr. R. H. Hutton puts it, " which can renovate the springs and purify the aims of the soiled and exhausted nature."[1] It is a craving which is not characteristic merely of the self-indulgent and the vicious, but " is perhaps even more powerfully exhibited in men of strong self-control and highly disciplined natures." A partial parallel would be the rich young ruler whom Jesus loved, a man of high moral character, and yet one who needed to be taken out of himself and given a new commanding aim for life. In the Johannine interpretation it is the divine love with its revelation of what life means that counteracts such a love of self as is active in the slow, deadening influences of material things, even when these assume refined forms. The latter life is, for John, death; to love, to understand what love is, from the revelation of the love of God, is to pass from a dead existence into real life. What God's love in Christ does is to furnish the opportunity for this break with the past.

The *truth* or reality of the gospel is therefore a manifestation of the real divine nature, which requires moral sympathy in those who would understand it and enter into it. In the Johannine interpretation, this does imply belief, for apart from belief in the Incarnation, it is not possible to appreciate the truth of the divine love. Yet, even so, this belief is closely linked to brotherly love as the indispensable condition for understanding what God really is. It is the conception which we have already met, especially in Paulinism.

2

Dante opens the tenth canto of the *Paradiso* by a word on the Father " gazing on His Son with the love which the one and the other breathes eternally." Except in the 'Beloved' title given to Jesus, we have met no anticipation of this Johannine idea of the Father loving the Son, for although it was present to the mind of Paul it acquires a definite range in the Fourth Gospel. Once and once only the Son's love for the Father is mentioned, however; as yet it is the Father's love for the Son which is emphasized.

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[1] 'The Metaphysics of Conversion' (*Contemporary Thought and Thinkers*, vol. i.).

The Son's love for men is so great that he can only compare it to the Father's love for himself: *as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you* (xv. 9). Behind the Son's mission lies the Father's love for him: *the Father loves the Son and has given him control over everything* (iii. 35); *the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he is doing himself* (v. 20); finally, *this is why my Father loves me, because I lay down my life to take it up again* (x. 17). God's love for Christ is thus connected vitally with Christ's love for men. In the closing allusion to this thought, there is even a hint that the one must not be regarded as secondary to the other: *thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me* (xvii. 23). How this transcendent love of the Father for the Son is related to the Logos conception, the writer does not suggest. It is a pre-temporal relation (xvii. 24, *before the foundation of the world*), and the glory of the risen Christ is in one aspect the reward of the Father's love for his self-sacrificing mission, for the thought of x. 17 is worked out in xvii. 24: *my glory which thou hast given me, because thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* But even here the idea swings round to the connexion between God and men: *that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

The glory of Christ (according to xvii. 22 f.) goes back to his pre-cosmic glory bestowed on him by the Father's love; that is, when *the Logos was with God in the beginning* (i. 1) the relationship was one of love. And this is held to explain the cosmic mission of Christ. *Thou hast sent me* is followed at once by *and hast loved them*, for the mission of Christ is the proof and realization of the Father's love for men; it is also true to say that it was inspired by the Father's love for the Son.

Christ's experience of this love is represented as a moral relation of obedience. *I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love* (xv. 10). The saying in x. 17, with its allusion to the Father's love for him, is at once followed by the other side of the idea, viz. that this love lays orders upon the Son (ver. 18).[1] In other words, the love of the Father for the Son carries with it moral obligations to self-sacrifice for the sake of men.

This theological development marks (*a*) the writer's instinctive desire to keep the relation of God and the Son from becoming too speculative. The conception of ἀγάπη in the divine nature prevents the idea of Father and Son from lapsing into a purely metaphysical relationship; it offers a steady reminder that the Father and the Son are morally related, and that they are one owing to their identity of purpose, rather than to any identity of essence or substance. The speculative element, which was bound up with the Greek associations of the phrase 'Son of God,' is controlled and dominated by this conception of ἀγάπη. (*b*) Furthermore, as we have observed, the love-relation between the Father and the Son is organically connected with the divine love for men; there is a repeated concern to show that it is not a detached piece of celestial speculation, like some of the gnostic elaborations of a tie between heavenly aeons. The love of Father and Son is bound up with the mission and message of God's love to the world of men; the significance of it is missed when it is detached and isolated.

Both of these interests are visible in the saying of John x. 30, which originally lay immediately after x. 17, 18; the words *I and my Father are one* refer to the unity of aim and purpose which is common to both Father and Son in relation to the world. In the Stoic scheme ‘ Father ’ and ‘ Son ’ were metaphorically applied to the cosmos, but here it is the unity of spiritual and moral purpose which is predominant. The metaphysical unity which shimmers behind i. 18 and i. 1 recedes further into the background of a saying like this, which simply concentrates the ideas of the gospel on the relations of the Father and the Son, by noting that the Son only works through the power of the Father and as commissioned by the Father, and that the Father only works upon men through the Son. “ Jesus and the Father constitute one power, by which the salvation of man is secured ”[1]; they are absolutely at one in this. *My Father loves me, because I lay down my life.* The self-sacrificing love, which is called out by the plight of men, is the expression of the love between the Father and the Son; it is a divine purpose in which Father and Son share.

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[1] *I love the Father and I am acting as the Father ordered* (xiv. 31).

No one in touch with this Johannine movement could therefore mistake the religion for a Jesus-cult. Already it was beginning to be called ‘ Christianity ’; Jesus as the Christ is the crowned king of the Realm which is God’s Realm, though it is sometimes spoken of as his, because he carries out the divine purpose. In him men were taught to see God, and through him to believe in God. His love was the love of God his Father. Jesus does not say, ‘ I am Love ’; that supreme word is reserved by John for God, and though Jesus is divine, the religion is not on the level of a cult like that of Sarapis or of Mithras. It is plain that many primitive Christians must have gained their first impressions of Jesus from acquaintance with stories of his earthly life and its loving ways, or from watching his spirit of love in members of the Church; but the NT consistently urges that the ground of Christian faith and life lies in more than a worship of Jesus by himself or in admiration or imitation of his human character.

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[1] Denney, *Jesus and the Gospel* (p. 93).

A vital, though less obvious, expression of the Father's love for the Son comes out in the phrase *he who has the bride is the bridegroom* (iii. 29). When the disciples of John complain that more people are now going to Jesus than to their master, John magnanimously replies that this is the will of God. Everybody goes to him? Well, but *no one can receive anything except as a gift from heaven.* If Jesus is receiving many adherents, they must be given to him by God. Why repine at the ways of providence? *He who has the bride is the bridegroom.* The sequence of thought is at once intelligible when we recollect that in Oriental marriage the bride was commonly chosen for the bridegroom by the father or the head of the household (as in the tales of Genesis about the selection of brides for Isaac and Jacob). So the church which gathers round Christ is his bride, appointed for him as a love-gift by the Father. The idea is the same as in vi. 37, where Jesus says, *All those will come to me who are the Father's gift to me, and never will I reject one of them.* Christ indeed shows his love by receiving and welcoming such; his relation to them is one of love. But primarily it is the will of the Father which selects these followers and gives them to him. One of the characteristic names for the Church in the Fourth Gospel is 'those whom the Father has given to the Son': *those whom Thou hast given me.* While this does not by any means exclude the idea of Christ's love for the People, it brings out the truth that his possession of the Bride is a mark of God's love for himself as well as for them, no less than the truth that his willingness to carry out the Father's purpose by receiving them is a proof of his own love for the Father.

The bridal metaphor is only used elsewhere in the Johannine writings by the author of the Apocalypse, where he reproduces the older conception of the Community as the Bride of Messiah at the end, when he has vanquished his foes. Thus, in xix. 7, 8—*now comes the marriage of the Lamb; his* *bride has arrayed herself. Yea, she is allowed to put on fine linen, dazzling white (the white linen is the righteous conduct of the saints)*—the saints are the Bride at the triumphant end of things, when God reigns in glory, and as usual (see above, pp. 142, 143) there is a careful note of the moral purity required from the Church as thus chosen and honoured. Again, the Bride is identified with the heavenly Jerusalem in xxi. 2 f.—*the holy City, the new Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, all ready like a bride arrayed for her husband.* But, like Paul, the prophet includes the Church militant as well as the future triumphant Church in the symbol, for when he describes the ecstatic yearning of the prophets in the Community and the eager cries of 'Maranatha,' as the latter days press hardly on the saints, he writes, *The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' The Spirit* is a poetical personification of the prophets, while *the Bride* denotes the loyal, beloved Church on earth.

There is a minor and partial parallel in the term applied to a local community in the second letter of John, where some church is called *the elect Lady* (κυρία), i.e. as a mother, with the members called her children (*I was rejoiced to find some of your children leading the true Life*, 4), and some other community is called her *elect Sister* (13). The term κυρία is probably suggested by Κύριος (Lord); the semi-poetic personification is indeed due to the primary idea of the Church at large as the Bride of the Lord, but no use is made of this relationship in the note. The appellative really confirms the evidence for the use of Bride as applied to the present Church on earth in Johannine circles. *Elect* is a popular term, not a Johannine, for it never occurs in any Johannine writing, the sole exception being an echo of the older view in Revelation xvii. 14, where the saints who share in the campaign of Messiah at the end are *the elect, the chosen* (ἐκλεκτοί), *the faithful*, i.e. those who by their loyalty *ratify their calling and election*, as a later writer puts it (2 Peter i. 10).

3

So far as individuals are concerned, the love of Christ is not represented in the Fourth Gospel as a motive in the 'signs,' as they are called, which correspond to the miracles of Jesus in the synoptic tradition. Except in the story of the raising of Lazarus, the tales of the 'signs' subordinate the motives of pity and sympathy to the motive of displaying the glory of the Son; they tend to be exhibitions of supernatural power, designed to elicit faith in the divine claims of Christ. The evangelist "discerned, often too exclusively, in his Master's miracles the purpose of 'manifesting forth the divine glory,' as distinguished from the human and temporary purpose of conferring blessing on private lives."[1]

On the other hand, Christ's love is manifested in personal devotion. This is occasionally described as love for individuals, like Martha and Mary and Lazarus (xi. 3, 5, 36), or for the beloved disciple (xiii. 23, etc.), but more usually it is affection for the group of disciples in general. *He had loved his own in this world, and he loved them to the end* (xiii. 1).[2] *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you* (xv. 9). His self-sacrifice is due to his love for them as well as to his devotion to the Father's will (xii. 28, x. 17, 18), for that will is directed towards the eternal welfare of those who are His own. The self-sacrifice culminates in the death upon the cross. *We know what love is by this, that He laid down his life for us* (1 John iii. 16). *To lay life down for his friends, man has no greater love than that* (John xv. 13).[3]

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[1] R. H. Hutton, *Theological Essays*, p. 208.

[2] *He had loved his own in this world, and he loved them* εἰς τέλος—which may mean either *to the end* or *utterly*. The idea is that he gave them a final proof of his love not only in the footwashing but in the teaching and suffering down to the moment when he cried, *It is finished* (xix. 30). All the action and passion of the closing hours is ascribed to his love for his own, as well as to his loving obedience to the will of the Father.

[3] Seneca, *Epist.* ix. 10: in quid amicum paro? Ut habeam pro quo mori possim . . . cuius me morti opponam et inpendam.

The words *you have not chosen me, it is I who have chosen you, appointing you to go and bear fruit—fruit that lasts* (xv. 16), have a twofold bearing. (*a*) They emphasize service or fruitful activity for God as the aim of Christ's loving choice—a truth which we shall meet later, under love to God, and (*b*) they bring out sharply the divine initiative in this friendship ; it is to Christ's loving choice that the new relationship is due, not to any insight or acuteness on the part of the disciples. Not what they saw in Christ, but what he saw in them, is the basis of the tie. This is the thought which is otherwise put in i. 12 f. (*those who believe in his Name, who owe this birth of theirs to God, not to human blood, nor to any impulse of the flesh or of man*), and elsewhere. Like ' born of God,' it is a Johannine equivalent for Paul's thought of grace or election. The most direct expression of the thought is in another connexion, however ; in 1 John (iv. 10) the writer reminds the Church that *love lies in this*, not in our love for Him (i.e. God) but in His love for us.

There is another aspect of these intimate relations between the loving Christ and Christians, who are called his ' friends.' *To lay life down for his friends, man has no greater love than that.* This is the high-water mark of love, to sacrifice itself for the beloved. But the evangelist notes another proof of Christ's love, in his full revelation to the disciples. *You are my friends—if you do what I command you ; I call you servants no longer, because a servant does not know what his master is doing : I call you friends, because I have imparted to you all that I have learned from my Father. . . . This is what I command you, to love one another* (xv. 13–17). All the commands of Christ run up into the single command, ' Love one another,' and this is made the test and proof of discipleship ; *you are my friends if* (and as) *you do what I command you.* But the point is that this condition is bound up with the great privilege of entering intelligently into the mind of the Lord. Christ may keep back something for love's sake, but he never keeps back anything for lack of love. He may withhold certain truths; as he says (xvi. 12), *I have still much to say to you, but you cannot bear it just now.* Nevertheless, *I call you friends, because I have imparted to you all that I have learned from my Father*—on the principle that frank confidence is the mark of real friendship.[1]

4

The experience of God's love is thus a growing experience, into which the Christian enters more and more as he is faithful. This is put in two ways.

(*a*) A characteristic feature of the Johannine teaching is that God's love is promised as a reward for Christian devotion. God loves those who love as He does, not in word but in deed. In describing the love of the Father for the Son, the evangelist can even make Jesus say: *this is why my Father loves me, because I lay down my life to take it up again* (x. 17). So is it with Christians. *He who possesses my commands and obeys them is he who loves me, and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and appear to him. . . . If anyone loves me he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him* (xiv. 21–23). As the Son comes in the person of the Spirit (ver. 15 f.), so the Father comes in and with the Son; and this 'coming' is described as an experience of the Father's love in return for obedience. Obedience to the words or commands of Jesus is not only the outcome of love to the Lord, but the avenue to a fuller revelation of the Father's love.

The thought is put slightly otherwise in xvi. 27: *the Father loves you himself, because you have loved me and believed that I came forth from God.* Here it is the obedience of belief that is foremost; love for Christ and the faith in his mission which it involves is rewarded by the experience of God's love.

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[1] Seneca, *Epist.* iii. 2, 3: tu vero omnia cum amico delibera . . . toto illum pectore admitte, tam audaciter cum illo loquere quam tecum . . . quid est, quare ego ulla verba coram amico meo retraham ?

(*b*) Another aspect of human experience under the order of divine love is presented by the allegory in John xv. 1–9: *I am the real Vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser; he cuts away any branch which is not bearing fruit* (as Judas had just been removed from the fellowship), *and cleans every branch that does bear fruit, to make it bear richer fruit. . . . Remain in me, as I remain in you. . . . I am the vine, you are the branches. . . . As you bear rich fruit and prove yourselves my disciples, my Father is glorified. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; remain within my love.* This is the thought (of Hebrews xii. 5 f., Revelation iii. 19, etc.) of sufferings as the discipline of Fatherly love, as part of the divine education of life. John chooses the figure of the vine being pruned that it may yield its best. Love never loses sight of our highest capacities; love often strips us of encumbrances, that we may do better than we have done: this is one clue to the thought of John xv. 1–8. Yet all such allusions suggest that Christians must not regard persecution and privation as wanton, ruthless blows, which have no meaning, but as wisely directed, the dealing of a Father who desires the very best from His children and who knows that it is only by suffering sometimes that life yields its finest fruit. The natural instinct is to spare ourselves and avoid strict and stern dealing with our weaknesses. We are "bafflers of our own prayers," as Matthew Arnold warns us:

> We would have inward peace,
> Yet will not look within;
> We would have misery cease,
> Yet will not cease from sin;
> We want all pleasant ends, but will use no harsh means.

And so God prunes life, inflicting harsh discipline, or what seems to be harsh discipline, for the highest ends of life in

His wise oversight. The love-language is absent from the opening of this passage, but the thought is set in the love-category, for towards the close the argument proceeds (9 f.) that this relationship between Christians and Christ, for which such dealing is required, is a relationship of mutual love.

(*c*) In the future, after the Coming of the Lord at the end, there will be an indescribable experience of the Father's love in the new and final order of being. *Think what a love the Father has for us, in letting us be called ' children of God'! That is what we are. . . . We are children of God, now; what we are to be is not apparent yet, but we know that when he appears, we are to be like him—for we are to see him as he is* (1 John iii. 1, 2). The higher state of heaven will be a development of the present relation, which is based on the Father's pure and free love. It is the truth which underlies the conception of the Church as the eternal Bride.

The opening words of the passage, with their exulting confidence, mark the advance of Christianity beyond the wistful hope of Philo in the *Confus. Ling.* (28): "Even if one be not yet actually worthy of being called a son of God, let him aim to have his life ordered after God's first-born, the Logos, the oldest of His angels . . . for although we are not fit as yet to be considered God's children, we are fit to be considered children of His eternal Image, the most sacred Logos."

5

This stress on love in the divine nature is as important as it is in the teaching of Paul. The emphasis of Paul upon love amid the categories of apocalyptic messianism was revolutionary; his recognition of love as revealed in the divine person and work of Jesus Christ the Son of God proved to be a new centre for estimating the significance of Christianity, so that even when he was using older phrases, legal terms, or financial metaphors, they were employed in a higher sense, determined by his original perception that everything in life went back to gracious love in God. Similarly in the Johannine teaching, though the setting is different. What made the emphasis on love so needful and vital was the contemporary tendency to interpret God and religion in misleading terms, a tendency that may be detected even in Philo, for example, as well as in later gnosticism. Philo's God required the Logos, in order to act upon the world. God as pure being could only touch created things through an intermediary or intermediate powers. Such was the tendency of all logos-systems, to remove the Deity from direct action in creation and providence; and this led to the risk of religion becoming a philosophy preoccupied in some process of aeons. The Johannine stress on ' love ' safeguarded the new interpretation of Christianity against the danger of any such mythological or metaphysical element overpowering the ethical and spiritual. It was intended to keep the relations of God and man within the moral sphere.

The advance marked by a belief that *God is love* is not so much determined by any antithesis like the fear that God is not loving, as by the tendency to identify the divine nature with a surplus of what we moderns call ' substance.' The gnostics might admit that God was Spirit or Light, but not that He was Love, for their aim was to connect religion with a process of aeons, which made communion with God mainly an attempt to escape the physical by means of intuition or ecstasy or some form of sacrament. Whereas the Johannine conviction that *God is love*, love in self-sacrifice and vicarious suffering, removed Christianity from the limitations of such natural religion. For while John was not a Platonist, he is conscious that love does not come within the category of substance, but only within the categories of power and activity. Thus his reading of love opens the way for a new presentation of religion based on the facts of the moral life.[1] And, even when a metaphysical element is recognized—such as is present in the Johannine idea of reality and life as well as of the sacraments—the predominating conception of love prevents this from assuming undue proportions.

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[1] Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Theologie* (second edition), ii. 443.

II

THE response to God's love is freely stated as love to God or Christ in return. This we have already had occasion to observe, no less than the definition of such love as dutiful and obedient. *Love to God means keeping his commands* (1 John v. 3). This is one of the most characteristic truths in the religious ethic of the Johannine writings. It is never driven home by OT quotations, and yet it sounds like an echo of the OT phrase 'to love God and keep His commandments,' a phrase hardly ever used by the prophets (Daniel ix. 4 is an exception), but common in the Psalter and in the Law, especially in Deuteronomy. The expression comes up explicitly in John xiv. 15–23: *if you love me you will keep my commands . . . he who possesses my commands and obeys them is he who loves me . . . if anyone loves me he will obey my word.* And Christ's *words* or commands are God's (xiv. 24). In 1 John ii. 15–17, *love for the Father* is defined as doing the will of God. Such a saying as *whoever obeys his word, in him love to God is really complete* (1 John ii. 5) comes to the same thing, for *word* here is equivalent to the revelation of God's mind in His commands.

I

Love to God or the Father is the theme of the First Epistle rather than of the Gospel. In the latter, no doubt, love to God is mentioned as incompatible with a rejection of the Son by the unbelieving Jews (v. 42, a passage parallel to that in viii. 42, on which see below), and it is implied in allusions like xii. 43, but only in the First Epistle is love to God treated fully. (i) There was evidently a danger of it becoming sentimental. Some pious people would cry, *I love God*, without any moral content to their emotion; they were sentimental in the sense that they enjoyed the experience without feeling that any obligation rose out of it. The mood might even be accompanied by an indifferent or a vindictive spirit towards their fellow-Christians, and this is denounced by the writer: *If anyone declares, 'I love God,' and yet hates his brother, he is a liar* (iv. 20). He is equally plain-spoken in iii. 15–18, ending with the appeal: *My dear children, let us put our love* (i.e. our love to God) *not into words or into talk but into deeds, and make it real*, the deeds being deeds of kindness and help. The practical test and proof of love to God is love to one's fellow-Christians. For if any Christian *possesses this world's goods, and notices his brother* (some other member of the Church) *in need, and yet shuts his heart against him, how can love to God remain in him?* It is the old demand that *if you have a poor man, one of your fellow-countrymen, in any township of the land, you must not harden your heart nor shut your hand against your poor brother* (Deuteronomy xv. 7), a demand echoed in the noble saying attributed to Rabbi Akiba (T.B. *Baba bathra* 10a), "God the Father of both rich and poor, would have the one help the other, and thus make the world a household of love." Why these Christians on the fringe of their religion should conceive that so plain a duty might be ignored, the writer does not explain. We may perhaps conjecture that one special temptation to this heartless conduct lay in the very emphasis upon right belief which is a marked feature of the Johannine interpretation. Jesus had indeed taught the crowds as well as fed them, in his day; both services were avenues of his loving interest in the welfare of men. So some may have considered that to impart right belief about the person of Christ was the all-important duty. Their fellows might be starving or shivering, but these theorists might persuade themselves that their duty was done when spiritual truth was held or stated. Certainly, as Sir Thomas Browne observed, "it is no greater charity to clothe the body than to apparel the nakedness of the soul." But this principle might easily be travestied. In the first century it is possible that some actually made it a pretext for a detestable form of selfishness; they may have used it to evade any social duty to their fellows, as though doctrinal interest absolved them from considering the welfare of the less fortunate. Against such a caricature of religion, John, like James, sets himself sharply.

In the First Epistle it is love to God, not love to Christ, which is uppermost. The only possible exception lies in the difficult words of v. 1: *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and everyone who loves the Father,* (τὸν γεννήσαντα) loves τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ. The latter phrase might mean 'the Son,' but as the writer passes at once to elaborate the thought of brotherly love (*this is how we are sure that we love God's children, by loving God and obeying his commands*, ver. 2), it is more probable that the words are a generic phrase for *the sons born of him.*

This is a more subtle temptation than the (ii) worldliness which is arraigned in ii. 15–17. *Love not the world, nor yet what is in the world; if anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desire of the flesh* (ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκός) *and the desire of the eyes and the proud glory of life* (ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου), *belongs not to the Father but to the world; and the world is passing away with its desire, while he who does the will of God remains for ever.* To readers who knew the great word *God so loved the world*, this must have sounded paradoxical. Probably it was intended to be a paradox, one of those sharp, arresting sentences which were meant to haunt and hold the mind. The antithesis is familiar; we have twice met it already (see above, pp. 40, 225). But in the Johannine form there is a vividness of expression which is characteristic. *The world* (ὁ κόσμος) here is not the world of which the writer has just said, *Jesus Christ is* *the propitiation for our sins, though not for ours alone but also for the whole world.* Such is the sense in John iii. 16. But the world which is not to be loved or desired is rather the transient, external order of things, which is alien to God (" this wide world and all her fading sweets "), and the forbidden love is the love which selfishly grasps at satisfaction of unreal desires in such a sphere. Those who love such gratifications identify themselves with the sphere of the cosmos (in this sense), and fade away, their life having no real existence since it is devoid of that love which is alone reality and life. It is almost an equivalent for the saying of Jesus that *a man's real life consists not in his possessions.* In fact the three illustrations chosen by the writer answer on the whole to what Jesus meant by such possessions. *The desire of* (felt by) *the flesh* (here used in its Pauline sense, of the lower, corrupt nature of man) is more than sensuality, though this is included—as in the beautiful prayer of *Sirach* (xxiii. 4 f.) :

> O Lord, Father and God of my life,
> give me not a proud look,
> and turn away concupiscence from me,
> may the lust of the flesh and licentiousness not overtake me.

Whatever seeks the satisfaction of the natural instincts at the expense of all else, is *the lust of the flesh. The lust of the eyes* enters into sensuality (Matthew v. 28, 29), as well as into the love of power and wealth (Matthew iv. 8) ; and the love of display, evinced in *Sirach's proud look* or in pluming oneself on possessions of any kind, is what *the proud glory of life* denotes ; *βίος* and *κόσμος* recur in the saying about *this world's goods* (iii. 17), and devotion to such external goods produces a vaunting temper which not only despises other people but is arrogant towards God. When Jesus spoke his word about the impossibility of serving God and Mammon, Luke observes that *the Pharisees who were fond of money sneered at him* (xvi. 14). It is artificial to attempt to distinguish the three illustrations; they are differing aspects of the same attitude, an attitude which is not unfairly described in Tennyson's 'Palace of Art,' where the soul thrills to feel itself amid luxury as 'Lord of the senses five,' although the touch of vaunting suggests that the writer of the Epistle had in mind the ostentation and self-assertion of merchants or prosperous folk.[1] The craving for self-indulgence, refined or sensuous, with its material preoccupations and its inevitable arrogance, *belongs not to the Father but to the world.* Perhaps it is not far from the mark to interpret the passage in the light of Herrmann's confession that "under the rule of God there should be formed in us . . . the power of a love which through self-denial creates something new. This work of God is checked in us by slothful devotion to pleasures of sense."[2]

Two misconceptions may be noted. (i) *Love not the world . . . for the world is passing away*, does not mean that man's interest is to be averted from the passing scene, because it is transient. There is no prohibition of delight in certain aspects of nature and experiences of human nature, which are ours only for a time. One reason why we love these is because they are only within our reach for the moment; it would be morbid to deny their charm and appeal. In a real sense, "love is the enemy of haste; it takes count of passing days, of men who pass away."[3] Again (ii), the counsel must not be supposed to convey any permission to hate the world, for although the pagan world may misunderstand (*the world does not recognize us, because it did not recognize Him:* iii. 1) or even hate Christians (*the world hates you:* iii. 13), it is impossible to imagine that they were to repay hatred by hatred. To *love the world* is rather to value what is in the world so highly that these prizes and possessions steal away the heart and become masters of life, commanding homage and absorption of interest. When Jesus declared that love to God was incompatible with love for Mammon, when James said the same about friendship for the world, the religious truth was precisely what lies in our passage, where the use of *κόσμος* for ‘ the world ’ carries on the language of Paul. Paul, however, employed *the present aeon* as a variant, whereas John never uses *aeon* (*αἰών*) in this sense.

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[1] The plural (ἀλαζονεῖαι) is used of the *proud pretensions* of the traders in James iv. 16, who ignore God in their plans for life. In *Wisdom* (v. 8) it is also associated with wealth: *τί πλοῦτος μετὰ ἀλαζονείας συμβέβληται ἡμῖν;* though elsewhere it takes a wider range, covering the temptations of high position (as in Test. *Joseph* xvii. 8).

[2] *Systematic Theology*, Eng. tr., p. 102.

[3] Conrad, in *The Mirror of the Sea*.

A close parallel to the expression occurs in a fragment of Philo, who declares that “ it is impossible for love to the world (*τὴν πρὸς κόσμον ἀγάπην*) to agree with love for God (*πρὸς τὸν θεόν*), any more than light with darkness ” ; the thought is in line with Matthew vi. 24 and James iv. 4, but *love for the world* is a phrase which tallies with the Johannine expression.

2

In the Johannine theology to *know God* is a more characteristic phrase than to *believe in God* ; for to know God is to love Him or to be ‘ in Him ’ (i.e. dependent on Him), and it is thus that the relationship of believers to God is commonly expressed. *He who says, ‘ I know him,’ but does not obey his commands, is a liar and the truth is not in him ; but whoever obeys his word, in him love to God is really complete. This is how we may be sure we are in him : he who says he ‘ remains in him ’ ought to live as he* (*ἐκεῖνος*, Jesus Christ) *lived* (ii. 4–6). For the writer, there is no real difference between ‘ in God ’ and ‘ in Christ ’ ; *we are in Him who is real, even in his Son Jesus Christ* (v. 20). His plea is that there is no ‘ knowledge ’ of God apart from obedience to His word or will, as expressed in the life of Christ, and that only such living obedience deserves the name of union with Him or love to Him, since such 'knowledge' requires a living experience inspired and controlled by the love which is God's own nature. Love alone knows the God who is love.

'Know' and 'knowledge' are here used in the same sense as we have already seen in Paul; they denote a personal relationship with God. John does not employ faith (or belief) and knowledge as opposing terms, as though the latter marked a higher level than the former; he can indeed speak of Christians 'knowing,' when he means that they have definite assurance of their faith, but he finds both faith and knowledge in the higher unity of love. *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love* (iv. 8). The love here is certainly brotherly love, but that makes no difference to the argument, for, we are reminded at once, *if we love one another, then God remains in us, and love for him is complete in us* (iv. 12); *God is love, and he who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him* (iv. 16). Love for God, which on its other side is love for fellow-Christians, is the true knowledge of God and real union with Him. There is an anticipation of this in the OT prophets, where the knowledge of God had implied a relationship of this kind long ago. Thus in Hosea (see above, pp. 15 f.), to 'know God' is spoken of as 'to love Him,' the fundamental conception being an apprehension of God's moral nature which results in a life of obedience, acting along the lines of His will.

The knowledge of God stirring love to Him is tersely put by Abailard thus: "Plus de Deo a nobis sentitur, plus a nobis diligitur, et cum profectu intelligentiae caritatis ascenditur flamma" (*Christiana Theologia*, iii.). It is a small point of literary interest that the NT writers never use the metaphor of fire for love; they prefer to compare it to streaming water, flowing in full tide into the life of men. The comparison to fire which became common afterwards was drawn partly from the tongues of fire at Pentecost, the Spirit being viewed as the source of passionate, warm love.

3

Naturally love is directed to Christ as well as to the Father; this collocation is as instinctive as in Paul and in the primitive Church, but its expressions are characteristic.

It is boldly claimed that if the Jews had been true to their religious training, they would have accepted Jesus as the Son of God, and this is put in terms of love: *If God were your father, you would love me, for I came here from God. . . . You belong to your father the devil . . . a slayer of men from the very beginning* (viii. 42–44). Failure to believe and receive Christ as the Son of God is referred to their connexion with the devil, whose hereditary policy had been a murderous hatred of God's truth. But obviously 'love' here (see also iii. 19) is not used in its intimate and deep sense, as it is in two passages like xiv. 21–24 and xxi. 15–17, where the evangelist means to suggest that "the knowledge that He had stretched out His hand to them across a great gulf and taken them to be His friends, was to be the motive henceforth of their adoring love."[1]

Both of these passages link love for Christ with obedience and service. *If you love me you will keep my commands . . . he who possesses my commands and obeys them is he who loves me . . . if anyone loves me he will obey my word* (xiv. 15, 21–23). What this obedience means specifically is brought out by the classical passage on the interview between Christ and Peter after the resurrection (xxi. 15–17). Three times in the conversation Jesus asks Peter, *Do you love me?* The apostle replies, *You know that I love you.* And the answer is, *Then feed my lambs, be a shepherd to my sheep, feed my sheep*—the pastoral metaphor for a personal responsibility which may involve self-sacrifice in the interests of others (x. 11). The proof of love to Christ is thus defined as acceptance of unremitting care for those who need help and guidance and protection in Christ's Church. Such is the religious idea which, for our present purpose, is all that matters in this passage: every profession and protestation of love for the Saviour falls to be tested by love for those whom the Saviour loves.

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[1] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 168.

The Johannine love for Christ is elicited by his self-sacrificing love. Even in this more mystical interpretation of Christianity the personality of Christ remains not only of supreme historic value, but also the object of devotion and adoration; there is nothing of the indefinite emotion stirred by the unknown and the Infinite, which moved the 'amor mysticus' in some circles of mediaeval religion, any more than of an evaporation of love for Christ in brotherly love and social service. The organic tie between love for Christ and love for fellow-Christians precludes the idea that one comes nearer to the Lord by sinking into the depths of oneself in subconscious reverie or rapture than by the activities of service towards those whom Christ loves. In fact, the entire Johannine theology of love, in this aspect, is an equivalent to the conception in Paul and others of covenant (διαθήκη), i.e. of a bond involving a relationship to the Lord which is created by His actions of grace in the history of the People; these actions are shown to run up into a climax in the revelation of Jesus the Christ, whereby the People are awakened to the full meaning and value of life, the source and standard of which is the divine love with its claim for reciprocal love and its manifestations of the sphere in which that love finds an adequate expression.

In the *Odes of Solomon* this love for Christ reappears with fervour, as, e.g., in iii. 3:

I should not have known how to love the Lord,
had He not loved me.
For who can distinguish love
save one who is loved?
I love the Beloved and my soul loves Him.

Two different Syriac words are here used for 'love,' and as indifferently as in the Syriac version of xiv. 21 and in the early Syriac renderings of xxi. 15–17.

In another passage the same religious emphasis is to be heard. *As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; remain within my love. If you keep my commands you will remain within my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain within his love* (xv. 9, 10). The one thing to which the love of Christ for the Church can be compared is the Father's love for Himself (see above), and the obedience of Christians to Christ in proof of their love for him is compared with the willing obedience of the Son to the Father, of which he speaks later in xiv. 30, 31; the coming of Satan in the imminent treachery of Judas will only *serve to let the world see that I love the Father and that I am acting as the Father ordered.* One motive of these words is to reassert the spontaneous action of Christ at the end, and also to insist that his death was due not to the devil, but to the overruling will of God; at the same time it is to be noted that the supreme proof of love lies in obedience to this will.

Love for Christ is therefore (*a*) belief in his divine mission: *you have loved me and believed that I came forth from God* (xvi. 27). There would be a parallel to this in 1 John v. 1, 2, where *everyone who believes Jesus is the Christ, is born of God* is followed by *everyone who loves the Father, loves him who is born of him*, if the last words could be taken as referring to Christ (see p. 272). Also, (*b*) there is obedience to His commands, especially the command of brotherly love in the Community. In both aspects, love is shown to be no mere empty sentiment. A third (*c*) allusion of minor importance occurs in xiv. 28: *if you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father—for the Father is greater than I am.* This comes directly after the promise, *You heard me tell you I was going away and coming back to you* with increased aid and blessing. What is meant is, that love ought to make them unselfish and intelligent, for their interests are Christ's interests, and his removal from them would not only mean fuller life for himself but eventually a deeper insight and entrance for them into the life of the Father on earth.

To sum up, then. The Johannine teaching on love to God or Christ indicates (*a*) that such response is the natural outcome of love divine. Love seeks love. If love is the deepest thing in God, it must correspond to the deepest thing in man, and the Johannine interpretation speaks simply of this as 'love.' As Bernard was fond of saying, "Cum amat Deus, non aliud vult quam amari" (*Sermones in Cant.*, lxxxiii. 4). (*b*) But such love, so far from being an occupation of dreamy recluses, must enlist the mind and the will: "Love to be worthy the name must be love at work, love governed by duty."[1] This forms the pivot of the third phase, to which we now turn.

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[1] Hort, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*, p. 126.

III

THE allusions to love for individuals are naturally few, since the only scraps of relevant literature are the two notes by the Presbyter, where the unknown church to which 2 John is addressed is called *the elect Lady and her children whom I love in the Truth*, i.e. with a Christian affection. 3 John is addressed to *the beloved Gaius*, *whom I love in the Truth* (1–2).

When the Presbyter writes *grace*, *mercy*, *peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father*, *in truth and love* (2 John 3) he means that belief or the knowledge of saving truth (with special reference to the divine person of Christ) is organic to genuine love. There may be an implicit thought of insincere love, of voluble or emotional affection which does not answer to the reality of brotherly love, but the primary setting of the phrase is the exposure of the church to untrue views of Christ which were being promulgated. The Presbyter warns his friends that such propaganda is to be shunned, and that those semi-Christians who are engaged in teaching a new theology or form of Christianity which denies the incarnation do not deserve to be welcomed with any love at all. Love is not an affable attitude towards all and sundry, irrespective of their views; the Church of love has definite principles and a creed about God and His Son, which determine its love. Throughout the Johannine epistles the errorists and heretics are not treated as objects of love; they are dangers to be avoided and denounced. There is a defensive attitude towards the outside world, indeed; while the Church is drawn from all races, it is separated from the world sharply. 'Brother' in these epistles means not a fellow-man but a fellow-Christian, and the binding ties of love towards such members of the Church are not supposed to include unbelieving people. The special interests of the situation restrict the attention of the writer, and mutual love is characterized by intensity rather than by a promiscuous extension to the mass of men.

Ignatius bids Christians *rule your lives by God and respect one another, let no one regard his neighbour κατὰ σάρκα* (*i.e. in a worldly spirit, externally*), *but ever love one another in Jesus Christ* (*Magn.* vi. 2). This corresponds to *in the Truth*; it is curious that the exact phrase, however, is not in the NT.

To *love the Lord in truth* was a phrase common in the *Psalter of Solomon* (vi. 9, x. 4), where it describes the loyal and sincere party in Judaism; once (xiv. 1) *those who love the Lord in truth* are further called *even those who endure his chastening* (ὑπομένουσι παιδείαν αὐτοῦ), the active and the passive sides being thus put together. But this is only a verbal parallel to the Johannine use.

Hospitality towards travelling Christians on a mission is one form of this brotherly love urged in 3 John 5–8. Gaius, like Philemon, had proved his *love* by entertaining some such individuals. *Beloved, you are acting loyally in rendering any service to the brothers and especially to strangers; they have testified to your love before the church* to which I belong. This hospitable, kindly interest is called *the truth of your life* (ver. 3), for such love is the real life of the Church, *the true Life*. The *strangers* in question were evangelists from other churches who *declined to take anything* by way of support *from pagans* to whom they preached or with whom they had friendly relations. Consequently, the Presbyter argues, *we* (emphatic, we Christians) *are bound to support such men*. This marks an extension of the love-duty of hospitality, for in the earlier allusions which have been before us (e.g. 1 Peter iv. 9, Hebrews xiii. 1) those needing hospitality were travelling Christians, who were too poor to afford the expensive inns, and who in any case ought not to be exposed to the demoralizing associations of such places throughout the Empire. Here, it is Christians travelling not on ordinary business but for the special purpose of preaching the gospel. It is urged that such persons are to be regarded as members of the Household of the faith and that hospitality ought to be extended freely to them.

This and the exercise of charity towards the destitute are the two specific forms of brotherly love in the Johannine literature. The practice of the forgiving spirit is not urged; it is subsumed under the general duty of love, the implacable temper being part of the 'hate' which is branded as the antithesis to genuine love.

I

The passage in 1 John iii. 16–18 which connects this love with Christ's love has been already under notice. *We know what love is by this, that He laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for the brotherhood.* Doubtless. But this supreme act of self-sacrifice is an exceptional demand; it is not required from all, and it is never required more than once of anyone. Hence, to prevent misconception, as if love were reserved for the heroic emergencies of life, the writer adds at once: *But whoever possesses this world's goods, and notices his brother in need, and shuts his heart against him, how can love to God remain in him?* It is the same counsel as is driven home to the conscience in James ii. 14–16, although there it is Christian faith which is named, not specifically love. "Man," says Sydney Smith ironically, "is certainly a benevolent animal. A never sees B in distress without thinking C ought to relieve him directly." Possibly this was one of the forms of evasion which the writer had in mind, but the words cover all the excuses (see above, p. 271) made by a callous heart for declining to help fellow-Christians in distress. The so-called parable of Dives and Lazarus is an adequate comment on the situation. There is no true love of this mutual kind, the Johannine teaching urges, without a firm grasp of true belief, but neither is there any real love without an instant response to the necessities of other Christians.

Observe (i) how the thought of Christ's love is naturally associated with the thought of love to God on the part of dutiful Christians, (ii) how easily brotherly love moves into the thought of that love for God which is its spring, and (iii) the sacrificial element in love. For ‘ to lay down one's life ’ may be taken in a broader sense, as implying cost and pain to oneself. And “ nothing belonging to Christ's kingdom tells much upon the world which has not in it the element of sacrifice and of Christ-like willingness to participate in pain ”[1] for the sake of aiding others. Hence the Johannine writer so often recurs to the precedent and example of Jesus on earth, who showed in the life that led to his death this self-sacrificing spirit of true love.

(*a*) John is dealing here with a situation inside the Church. One's *brother* is in need, and, because he is a brother, he is entitled to charity. “ C'est, à la vérité, un beau nom et plein de dilection, que le nom de frère,” Montaigne cries, speaking of his true friend Etienne de Boéce (i. 27). It was such, in no conventional sense, for the early Christians, since the love it implied had been created by the Father who had enrolled them in His household. It is significant that when Tertullian reports the evidence of outsiders about the Church, he claims that they witnessed and bore witness to a brotherly love which answered to the Johannine test—*as He laid down his life for us, so we ought to lay down our lives for the brotherhood.* See, pagans say, “ how Christians love one another, how ready they are to die for one another ” (*Apol.*, xxxix.). Also, like John, Tertullian refers to fellow-members of the Church as ‘ brothers ’ specifically. Pagans, he continues, rage at us for calling one another ‘ brothers.’ Why should we not ? “ We are indeed your brothers, by right of our common mother Nature, little as you deserve the name of human beings, you inhuman, wicked 'brothers'! How much more do they deserve to be called and considered brothers,' who acknowledge one Father in God, who have imbibed the spirit of holiness." The NT writers do not enter thus explicitly into the difference between 'brothers' as a Christian term and 'brothers' as a general description of human beings, but they assume, as they had been taught by Jesus, that God is the Father of those who as personal disciples of the Lord identify themselves with God's realm and enter into His spirit. The real brothers are those who are regenerated, not merely generated. It is the new creation, not simply creation, that makes human beings brothers of one another or children of the heavenly Father. The conviction of the Church was that the Lord Jesus had *conferred the power* (or rather, *the right*) *to become children of God, on those who believed in His Name, who owe this birth of theirs, not to human blood, nor to any impulse of the flesh or of man, but to God.* The title to sonship is not inherent in human beings as such but is conferred on those who love the truth or the light, who own Jesus to be all that he claims to be as the Christ or Son of the Father.

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[1] Dora Greenwell, *Colloquia Crucis*, p. 88.

(*b*) Why heartlessness in such a Household should emerge is only suggested indirectly. No doubt, some were content with fine words, instead of deeds. But indifference to brotherly love might also arise out of the common temptation, on the part of the intelligent or those who prided themselves upon their knowledge of religious truth, to assume airs of superiority to their fellows. Such a risk of unbrotherliness we have already met repeatedly in the primitive Church. Again, there may have been in the Johannine environment a special inducement to disparage brotherly love, owing to imperfect views about the person of Christ. It is plain that in John's day some teachers held that Jesus, as the writer puts it, *came by water, not by blood*, i.e. that the divine power descended upon him at the baptism but left him before the crucifixion. This is held to be a denial of his Sonship. Jesus is the Son of God, for *Jesus Christ is he who came by water, blood, and Spirit—not by the water alone, but by the water and the blood* (v. 5, 6). The error controverted here resembles, if it does not actually reproduce, the theology of a man like Cerinthus, as later writers represent it. Now, as brotherly love is bound up with the love shown by Jesus Christ in dying for the sake of men, any severing of the divine Christ from such a death would weaken the motive and spirit of the brotherly love which it inspired for true Christians. Furthermore, the docetic tendency, which was broader than any specific movement like that of Cerinthianism, may have fostered the inclination to base the brotherly love of Christians upon the standing precepts of the OT, without taking into account that definite reiteration of the command as *new* by the incarnate Christ (see below). That is, the requirements of the Christian code of love to one another were being drawn back to a source other than that of the injunction of Jesus. The true Christian, on the other hand, *ought to live as he* (Jesus) *lived*; the command of God is *that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another as he* (Jesus Christ) *has commanded us to do.*

Hence it is, for example, that the Presbyter entreats the church to practise brotherly love as a command, which is *not new* (in the sense of being a novelty); it is the command which we have had *from the very beginning* of the gospel, part of the living tradition of the authentic Church. *To live by his commands, that is what love means: and the command is, to love as you have learned to do from the very beginning,* not as these modern idealists teach, who deny an incarnate Christ (2 John 5 f.). The Presbyter does not recognize any brotherly love as genuine which does not flow from belief in the real Jesus Christ, who alone had taught such love with authority.

2

This brings us to the idea of the *new command.* But it involves a prior question. The Johannine writer did not conceive any possibility of doubting the love of God. Yet one qualification requires to be made, for he did consider it possible to miss what that love meant, if one failed to believe in the true Divine Son, who was incarnate and crucified. The writer of the First Epistle has no doubts—he presupposes none—about God's love for the Church; this is so plain for him in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ that there is no possibility of mistaking it. But he does see a possibility of mistaking what love to God means, and therefore, as there may be self-deception here, he offers a criterion for such love in the shape of brotherly love. To love God is to do His will; such is implied in ii. 15–17, where *love for the Father* is the same thing as doing the will of God, or, as he usually prefers to put it, obeying His word or His commands. These commands are summed up in brotherly love, so far as practical Christianity is concerned.

When he uses the general term *righteousness*, as the untranslatable term δικαιοσύνη may be rendered, the chief element in it is brotherly love. *Let no one deceive you, my dear children. . . . Anyone who does not practise righteousness does not belong to God, and neither does he who has no love for his brother* (iii. 7, 10). To *practise righteousness* is to share the divine nature (ii. 29, iii. 7), for He is Himself righteous or just (δίκαιος); that is, it is a synonym for doing the divine will, at once the expression and the evidence of the regenerate nature. The term is employed in quite an untechnical sense, for the older struggle against the Law in Paulinism had passed. When God is called *just* (John xvii. 25, 1 John i. 9), it is in connexion with His faithfulness to His loving purpose and promises, and similarly the practice of righteousness or moral goodness among men at once suggests love for others in the Community. The phrasing of iii. 7, in fact (*let no* *one deceive you: he who practises righteousness is just, as He is just*), corresponds to the Pauline sentence that he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law (i.e. the norm of righteousness). There is no antithesis between love and righteousness in man any more than in the nature of God; on the contrary, they flow in and out of one another.

Jesus is the just (δίκαιος), however, as the sinless One, the true Messiah who, himself innocent of sin, dies for the sins of his people (ii. 1).

Let no one deceive you on this point. Who were the plausible errorists? Gnostic thinkers in Christendom who sat loose to moral obligations in their soaring advocacy of enlightened spiritual religion? Or teachers who followed the debased form of Paulinism against which the epistle of James is directed? In any case, it is a subtle form of pseudo-religion, which John counters by asseverating that the distinctive characteristics of the divine love must reappear in human love; as the love of God entered human life for its gracious ends, it is in human intercourse that the opportunities for verifying and exercising love are to be sought and found. Love is not in union with the Absolute nor in the contemplation of mere Infinity, neither is it some natural endowment of the soul for being touched by the vague or the ideal. What love is, God has shown in Jesus Christ, and as His love is only to be known in our personal life through its self-sacrificing activities, so love on the part of Christians, which answers to the divine love, must seek expression in the activities of service and moral endeavour.

Obviously the writer has thus something in mind as he puts such emphasis upon what we call 'moral' actions in the proof of true religion. His words are directed against some contemporary tendency to resolve the higher life into an existence superior to the claims of ordinary ethical discipline. It may have been an incipient form of the gnostic spirit which Irenaeus (i. 6. 2) criticizes, according to which the 'spirituals' could afford to indulge in practices forbidden to ordinary people, since their 'perfection,' their seed of election, was so pure as to be impervious to any taint. "They affirm," says the church father indignantly, "that good behaviour is necessary for us (i.e. for the rank and file of mere church members), since apart from that we cannot be saved; whereas they will be saved unquestionably, not on account of their moral behaviour but because they are by nature spiritual." The same tendency was fostered by an overstrained asceticism, for, if it be held that the body is indifferent and the spirit inviolable, then law has no claims on the elect; hence the denial of the incarnation, which went back to a horror of the flesh and matter, would produce in ethics a risky carelessness about purity and morality. The Johannine writer, as being in sympathy with the more mystical aspects of the faith, was eager to anticipate any such inference being drawn from his position. He can say, in his sweeping, unqualified way, that *anyone who is born of God does not commit sin*; God's real children cannot sin, because they are born of God. But he also can say as definitely, *be sure that everyone who practises righteousness* within the fellowship of the Church of God *is born of Him*. It is the same healthy protest against pseudo-perfectionism which led a later mystic like the Belgian Ruysbroeck to denounce the "theopaths who consider any impulse to be divine and repudiate all responsibility."

The truth of the Johannine argument is that in the last resort it is not possible to understand and verify the love of God apart from the experience of love provided by human relationships in the Community. This had been already urged by Paul. Indeed, with reference to the supreme form of love the apostle appears to have been helped to appreciate the love of the Lord in dying for us by something that had actually happened in his own life. *Scarcely for a righteous* *man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.* Paul would have hesitated to call himself 'good' in this sense, i.e. as possessing qualities of human kindness and affection which inspire an enthusiasm in others. But he knew and he never forgot that some people had so thought of him. *Prisca and Aquila have for my life laid down their necks*, i.e. risked their lives. At some critical turn in his career these devoted friends had stood between him and death, hazarding their lives to save his. He recalled it gratefully, and we cannot go wrong in imagining that such an experience helped to throw light for him upon the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ for those who like himself had no claim whatever on the Lord. In this sense it is true to say that "all the divine perfections that draw out our love to God are those that we have gradually learnt to love first in our fellow-men—justice, truth, purity, gentleness, mercy, and the rest."[1] *He who does not love, does not know God*, as John puts it.

The eagerness to present an objective basis for such Christian love shines out in the closing words of the First Epistle, where the writer is summarizing his message (v. 20–21): *We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us insight to know Him who is the Real God; and we are in Him who is real, even in his Son Jesus Christ.* To 'know God' in His real truth and to 'be in Him' are for John one and the same thing. As he or another of his school said elsewhere, *this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only real God, and him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ*, such knowledge being the inward illumination of the mind and heart by means of which the realities of God in Christ commend themselves to those who will act upon them in trust and love. The illumination involves such a responsibility for the gift as issues in brotherly love, but what John at the end of the epistle has in mind chiefly is that this illumination is a gift, the true God Himself enabling us to receive and possess it. No speculative construction such as the gnostics of his day offered could, in his judgment, yield this real knowledge of God, for their systems of faith were self-made. Hence he adds, *This is the real God, this is eternal life*, this that I have shown you. *My dear children, keep yourselves from idols*, keep clear of idols. The interpretations of Christianity which the gnostics gave were artificial products of their own imagination, with nothing creative about them, mere idols, artistically devised, no doubt, but out of touch with reality. He calls them *idols*,[1] because they were made by the ingenious mind of man, instead of resting on the objective revelation of God in the love and life of Jesus Christ. John, we might say, is thus telling his readers that the modern equivalent for idol-worship is the habit of allowing oneself to become fascinated by idealistic, spiritual presentations of Jesus which are out of relation to the real facts about his life and death.

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[1] Tyrrell, *Hard Sayings*, p. 309.

Ignatius not long afterwards took the same line in arguing against a similar tendency in Asia Minor. Such preachers and teachers, he declared, were all the more dangerous because they used the name of Jesus for the semi-incarnate being whom they held up for faith. He compares their introduction of talk about Jesus Christ to the trick of mingling honey with poisoned wine, in order to get the unwary to swallow the mixture. And when he warns the church against this specious teaching, he stresses the criterion of love. Thus in *Trall.* vi.–viii. : *Be renewed in faith (which is the flesh of the Lord) and in love (which is the blood of Jesus Christ) ; let none of you bear a grudge against his neighbour*, etc., the point of the latter sequence is not only that mutual love is the best proof of true belief, but that such love is the heart-blood of the true Lord and his Church, not of any mystical sect with an emasculated belief in the Incarnation. *Mark those who have heterodox opinions about the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us*, the free gift of God's revelation in the Incarnate Christ, *and notice how contrary they are to the mind of God ; they have no interest in love, no care for widows or orphans, for people in distress, for prisoners or discharged prisoners, for those who are hungry or thirsty* (*Smyrn.* vi.).

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[1] Pascal's bold saying is intelligible to the religious mind, however paradoxical it may sound. " On se fait une idole de la vérité même ; car la vérité hors de la charité n'est pas Dieu, c'est son image et une idole."

3

This brotherly love, as we have already had occasion to notice, is linked to the divine love which is its source and standard ; it is also the distinctive mark of the Christian community, and it is called therefore *a new command. I give you a new command, to love one another—as I have loved you, you are to love one another. By this everyone will recognize that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another* (John xiii. 34–35). *Everyone* here means all the world of outsiders, for this brotherly love was one of the features which caught the attention and admiration of pagans from the first. Such charity as well as chastity attracted surprise and almost involuntary envy from the world ; as it is put in the Octavius dialogue of Minucius Felix (9), these Christians *love one another almost before they know one another !* Now, according to Johannine theology, this is the quintessence of practical Christianity, this brotherly love as commanded by Christ. But why is it so definitely called a *new* command in the First Epistle, as in the Gospel ? *Beloved, I am not writing you any new command, but an old command which you have had from the very beginning ; the old command is the word you have heard.* He means, to love one's neighbour or brother is in the old sacred books, which those of you who were born Jews *have heard* read *from the first*, and which those of you who were born pagans learned to know as soon as you entered the Church, if you did not know it already as proselytes. An old command! And yet in another light it is *a new command* I am writing to you—*realized in him* (i.e. in the Son of God who 'late in flesh appearing' issued it afresh to the Church) *and also in yourselves* (who are learning to keep it), *because the darkness* (of hate and ignorance) *is passing away and the true light is already shining*, the light of the gospel of Christ. *He who says he is 'in the light' and hates his brother* Christian, *is in darkness still* (ἄρτι); his conversion is still to take place, for all his protestations that he enjoys fellowship with God. On the other hand, *he who loves his brother remains in the light* (ii. 7–10). The writer returns to this point in iii. 11–14: *this is the message you have learned from the beginning, that we are to love one another. . . . We know we have crossed from death to life, because we love the brotherhood; he who has no love for his brother remains in death.* The command of brotherly love was *old* in the sense that, as part of the moral ideal in the OT, it was not unprepared for, but the spirit and force of it as enjoined by Jesus appeared a new disclosure to the experience of Christians. Some said, Why seek any basis for it except in the OT? No belief in an incarnate Christ is needful. John holds that as he practised love and as he laid it down for his followers (*this is my command, you are to love one another as I have loved you*), it seemed to possess a range and depth undreamed of before. When it was brought into vital relation to faith, it involved a conviction of the eternal value of the soul, which, as evoked by Christ, was a new thing in life; it became a reality in Christ and in the Church as believers obeyed Him. The new thing was not the command of love as such, but the kind of love required, the motive of it, and the scope it assumed. For example, when Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel (xiii. 1–10) makes the duty and order of love the distinguishing mark of his followers, when he lays this self-sacrificing, helpful, humble task upon them as his last command—not to observe a sacrament but to love one another, he is echoing the synoptic principle (Matthew v. 23 f.) that brotherly love must take precedence of any ritual worship, needful as the latter may be. So, John pleads, to love one's brother is the one Christian condition for enjoying the light of fellowship with God, to love one another as Jesus Christ has commanded us to do, to be charitable and unselfish, as he was who actually laid down his life for our sakes.

A corollary of this may be found in the fact that a command is always new as it is practised. In the abstract it may sound dull and vague, but once one tries to carry it out, how it reveals unsuspected depths of meaning and untold possibilities! A duty like that of brotherly love may be old, in the sense that it is familiar, but it opens up amazingly and discloses intensely interesting reaches, when it is applied to the relationships of life; then we say, 'this is a new thing altogether.' This is what Coleridge means in the third of his Introductory Aphorisms (*Aids to Reflection*): "To restore a commonplace truth to its first uncommon lustre, you need only translate it into action. But to do this, you must have reflected on its truth." Which was what John had done and what he sought to make his readers do. A long period had passed since the beginning of the Church; he had thought out the meaning of this command of brotherly love in the light of God's love, and had seen in it ever new significance. It is his purpose to stir the conscience of his readers to an intelligent appreciation of what this command of Christ means, in view of Christ himself, till the old becomes also a new thing for them.

4

The Johannine equivalent for Paul's *faith and love* is conveyed in a passage like this: *This is what he commands, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he has commanded us to do* (iii. 23)—the first time that the author of the epistle mentions *believe*. The divine command for life involves right belief about the incarnation of God's Son, and brotherly love in obedience to the command of the incarnate Jesus. These two, it is implied, form a synthesis. The teaching on brotherly love moves mainly along two lines: (i) that apart from it there is no genuine devotion to God, and (ii) that there is no real root for it except in the true confession of faith, that it is derived from no inner light or mystical intuition, but from a conviction of God's redeeming love as manifested in the divine Son. This latter argument is of vital moment, in the Johannine teaching, as we have already observed. For the brothers to be loved are believers, and the only devotion to them which we may feel sure is genuine must arise from a conscious realization of the faith common to them and to ourselves. Only the divine Son gives the command of brotherly love, and therefore the practice of this new command rests upon a conviction that Jesus is the Son of God; the inference is, that theories about a spiritual Jesus, who was not truly incarnate, offer no basis for such brotherly love as the Church recognizes.

This is the clue to a difficult word about assurance in 1 John v. 2 f.: *this is how we are sure that we love God's children, by loving God and obeying his commands* (*for love to God means keeping his commands*). It is the last word upon love in the epistle, for the writer is now passing to his final emphasis upon belief or faith. In doing so, he recalls the truth that the only full revelation of God the Father is through Jesus Christ His Son: *everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and everyone who loves the Father, loves the sons born of him* (ver. 1). Consequently, it is only by love to this real God that we can be sure we are truly loving His household. The sincerity of Christian love is no doubt attested by practical obedience to the will of God, which is love, but there is the further thought here that only a love for God which carries with it a true belief in the Incarnation is any guarantee for the validity of brotherly love. *The Father who has sent the Son as the Saviour of the world* is the one God in whom real love,

love that deserves the name of love, is present; such is the emphatic message of the epistle. Those who preach and believe a faith which impairs or denies this Incarnation are incapable of understanding what love means, and the writer has such misleading propaganda in view as he declares that the one way of being sure that our brotherly love is genuine is to possess the true belief or revelation from which it springs. At the same time, he pleads that such love to God must issue in brotherly love, for that is the thread of the argument which he is now concluding. *We get this command from him, that he who loves God is to love his brother as well.* You ask, what does *love God* mean? This: *everyone who believes Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and everyone who loves the Father, loves the sons born of him. This is how we are sure that we love God's children, by loving God and obeying his commands* (iv. 21–v. 2). In other words, to be certain of our fellowship with one another we must be certain that we are in fellowship with the real God, and so in fellowship with Him that we never stand aloof from those who belong to His household.

This connexion between brotherly love and belief or knowledge has been already noted, but it is so fundamental that the full statement requires to be studied by itself (in the first epistle, iv. 7–16). *Beloved, let us love one another, for love belongs to God* (i.e. the brotherly love we experience in Christian fellowship), *and everyone* (in that fellowship) *who loves is born of God and knows God; he who does not love, does not know God, for God is love.* Brotherly love is the effect and outcome of the regenerate life; it is not a spontaneous growth of the soul, but an inspiration from above, and only the loving are the truly enlightened, who understand God's character. The writer then proceeds to show how this divine character of love acts upon human life. What do we Christians mean by saying, *God is love*? The reply is: *This is how the love of God has appeared for us, by God sending* *his only Son into the world, so that by him we might live.*[1] *Love lies in this, not in our love for him* (i.e. God) *but in His love for us—in the sending of his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* Christian love, either as brotherly love or as love for God, has therefore its origin in the divine love for man, and this divine love is fully manifested in the redeeming mission of Jesus Christ. You ask, how are we to show our love for so loving a God ? *Beloved, if God had such love for us, we ought to love one another. God* (θεόν without the article, emphatic as in John i. 18), God in His essential nature, *no one has ever seen ; but if we love one another, then God remains within us, and love for him is complete in us*—a turn of expression due to the current language of the mystery-cults in which the votaries hoped to 'see God' by being re-born into His nature and thus participating in His life. Only, John makes this complete love for God or union with Him rest upon mutual love, instead of teaching that its condition was some private ecstasy or mystical rite. In Paul the Spirit is the inward source of brotherly love, but for John the Spirit is the assuring power of conviction.[2] Hence he proceeds to explain : *this is how we may be sure we remain in him and he in us, because he has given us a share in his own Spirit ; and we* (this is the apostolic witness) *have seen, we can testify, that the Father has sent the Son as the Saviour of the world* (i.e. to create and maintain such union and fellowship between God and man). Then comes the summary : belief in God's redeeming love essential to Christian love or union with God, and the practice of Christian love as essential. *Whoever confesses* his belief *that 'Jesus is the Son of God,'* abjuring all docetic or humanitarian theories about the person of Christ, *in him God remains, and he remains in God ; well* (for this is no merely formal belief but personal experience and conviction), *we do know, we have believed, the love God has for us*, which is thus manifested in Jesus Christ His Son. And this faith works by love. For *God is love, and he who remains in love* (towards the Christian brotherhood) *remains in God, and God remains in him.* The nexus of faith, knowledge, and love could not be more closely drawn. Belief in the historical revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ is connected with a 'knowledge' which is more than any merely intellectual attitude ; in the cults 'the light of knowledge' vouchsafed to the initiated did bring them a *θέα* or vision of God, but this insight into the higher mysteries of the divine nature was not connected with brotherly love as it is by John ; the semi-mystical apprehension of the deity, which did lead to communion with the divine nature, saved the worshipper from the malign influence of fate and the flesh. But the characteristic feature in the Johannine teaching is that this loving union with God or 'knowledge' of Him is not only mediated through Jesus Christ His Son, but also expressed in brotherly love, so that mystical piety is freed from the unwholesome tendency, which appeared within some circles of mediaeval mysticism, to regard the supreme object of the soul as a union with God at the expense of human relationships, as though the fewer ties one had with God's creatures the nearer one might come to God Himself.

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[1] The phrase is unusual ; the evangelist says, *to be saved by him* (δι' αὐτοῦ, John iii. 17), but 'to be saved' was equivalent to 'living' or 'entering into life,' and the writer of the epistle explains in a moment (ver. 15) that it corresponds to union with God.

[2] One hesitates to apply the term 'mystical' to a writer like John any more than to Paul ; but one might say that John's 'mystical' interpretation is strangely independent of the Spirit. There is nothing here to remind us of the mediaeval hymn to the Spirit which begins, "Amor patris et filii."

The two sides are put dramatically in the twofold context of the saying, *no one has ever seen God* (John i. 18, 1 John iv. 12). In the Gospel the writer continues, *but God has been unfolded* (ἐξηγήσατο, a term for religious interpretation and initiation) *by the divine One, the only* (μονογενής) *Son, who lies upon the Father's breast* as the Beloved. How this revelation of God's reality came about, the Gospel then proceeds to show by describing the life of Jesus on earth. In the Epistle, the same statement is made, *God no one has ever seen* ; then the writer adds, *but if we love one another, then God remains within us, and love for him is complete in us* ; love for one another is the outcome of His love for us, and thereby alone can we hope to realize the truth of what He is. He does not argue that unselfish brotherly love is enough, as though service sufficed without worship. *Love for ' him ' is complete in us*, not love for one another. The revelation of God's love in the divine Son is assumed ; John takes this for granted here. He is dealing with some who were, however, prone to mistake the bearings of their religious faith by depreciating brotherly love in favour of a supposed love-devotion to the Lord which enjoyed itself in rapt experiences or in speculative mysticism. In correction of this error John holds that the reality of God, as Christ reveals Him, is only accessible to a real life, i.e. to a life which follows the love-way taken by Christ himself on earth.

5

The close connexion between love and unity is remarkable. In writings like Ephesians and the Acts of the Apostles, where unity is stressed, the main obstacle is the racial antipathy of Jews and Gentiles. But this difficulty lies behind the Johannine period, where there is no longer any real problem created by the Law. The situation is different, though not less trying. In one aspect it resembles that faced by Paul in First Corinthians, where he is dealing with divisive tendencies in the local church. But there is a special strain in the Johannine situation, whether we explain it by the incipient tendency of ' gnostic ' movements towards an aristocratic classification of believers, or by the influence of contemporary politics affecting the life of the churches, i.e. by the party-spirit of the Asiatic townships where the rivalries and enmities which had wrecked the older life of

Hellas were rampant, to the detriment of kindness and generosity and goodwill. Apart from this, however, there must have been the ordinary temptations of religious communities to spitefulness and backbiting and sectarianism, due to the need of stressing belief and also to the strain of persecution. There is a Johannine warning against this pervasive danger, and a positive statement of what unity signifies.

We know we have crossed from death to life, because we love the brotherhood ; he who has no love for his brother remains in death (1 John iii. 14). No love, no 'life'—in the deeper Johannine sense of the term; such is the thought of the passage. It is significant that the writer at once proceeds to echo the teaching of Jesus (in Matthew v. 21 f.) : *anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.* But the stringent demand for brotherly love in the Church is more significant still, with its implication that to be devoid of love or indifferent is the same thing as to hate ; 'hatred' here denotes the selfish attitude which slights and ignores a fellow-Christian, and it is implied that unless life is charged with active love it will become actively ready to indulge in antipathy.

The temper denounced by the writer here is the evil spirit which reappears in religious communities under raiment of many colours. Browning's "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," Voltaire's comment on the Jesuits and the Jansenists ("contending for a century which party loved God most suitably, and which could most effectively harass and torment the other"), and Pope's couplet on the Anglican lady—

> Whose life the Church and scandal share,
> For ever in a passion or a prayer—

are only outstanding illustrations of this evil spirit. But in the Johannine interpretation the positive stress on unity in the Church as involved in a true sense of unity with God is genuinely Semitic, for in the OT any real unity of Israel must rest upon its alliance with the Lord; the closer the latter, the firmer the former. This is sublimely described in the mystical prayer of John xvii. 21 f.: *May they all be one! As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, so may they be in us*, united as they draw a common life from us. *Yea, I have given them the glory thou gavest me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and thou in me—that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may recognize that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* The union and communion of believers in the Church has its ground and pattern in the divine unity to which they are bound by love divine. The mission of Christ, to impart the divine glory or realization of bliss and loving fellowship, results ideally in the unity of the Church, for as the Father's love was realized in and by the Son's obedience, so it is to be realized in the Church's unity as that is determined by the gracious love of the Son himself. It is by entering into this divine purpose that the Church realizes its unity and final bliss, as Christians are truly children of the Father and objects of Christ's goodness. The underlying thought is that the centre of unity for Christians lies in their relationship to God,[1] and that nothing is wanting on His part to create a perfect mutual fellowship, which will avoid the scandals of internal disunion and strife. As brotherly love is referred to the divine love, so the unity of Christians is viewed, not as mutual adjustment, but as the result of a relationship to God in heaven. "Only in looking heavenward, take it in what sense you may, not in looking earthward, does what we can call Union, mutual Love, Society, begin to be possible" (Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, iii. 2). This general truth pervades the entire Johannine conception of the Fellowship or *κοινωνία*, which is the embodiment of a divine Fellowship.

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[1] As Ignatius puts it (*Trall.* xi.): *'tis God who promises this union, He who is unity Himself.*

6

The relation between love and fear soon became a topic to be discussed in the Church. It appears in some glosses to the book of *Sirach*, in which the original conception of the fear of God as reverent piety was embedded, e.g. in ii. 15:

> *They that fear the Lord will not disobey his words,*
> *And they that love him will keep his ways.*

Here there is no antithesis between love and fear; they are practically synonymous. But 'fear' in the religious vocabulary has always tended to suggest dread of a lower kind; the history of a Greek term like *δεισιδαίμων* is instructive in this connexion. Hence we are not surprised to find that the Church versions of *Sirach* occasionally introduce glosses in order to make it plain that love and fear are organically connected. Thus, after i. 11, the words were added: "the fear of the Lord is a gift from the Lord, for it sets men on the path of love," love being in this way defined as the main element of 'fear' as piety. Similarly xxv. 11 (*the fear of the Lord surpasses all things*) is glossed by the words: "the beginning of the fear of the Lord is to love him."

Even earlier than this, in second-century rabbinism, the problem was discussed (*Sota*, v. 5) in connexion with the book of Job. When Joshua ben Hyrcanus argued that Job served God from love, another rabbi indignantly protested that his master, Jochanan ben Zakkai, had always taught, from Job i. 9, that Job merely served God from fear. Plainly the question had been raised about the very time when the Johannine writings were composed. Philo in an earlier day had repeatedly handled it. "All the exhortations of the law that make for piety," he argues in *Quod Deus Immutabilis* (xiv.), "are referable in my opinion to love or to fear for Him who is.

Love is most natural for those who attribute neither the parts nor the passions of man to the Deity, but who honour Him for Himself alone, as is befitting; whereas fear is most natural for those who view Him otherwise." That is, love for God is assigned to minds able to free themselves from anthropomorphic views. Philo's general position is that fear is a second-best attitude; if you cannot rise to the level of loving God as the beneficent θεός, at least fear Him as the authoritative ruler or κύριος. "O mind of man," he cries in *De Spec. Leg.* i. 8, "God requires from you nothing hard and elaborate and difficult, but what is perfectly simple and easy: it is to love Him as your benefactor, and, if not, at least to fear Him as your Ruler and Lord." The supreme level of religion is the affectionate response to God (*De Somniis*, i. 26); but Philo admits that fear is useful for those on the lower level. It is a religious interpretation which occurs often in Christianity, notably in Jonathan Edwards's treatise on *The Religious Affections*.

Sometimes it is thought that this is the issue before the mind of the writer in 1 John iv. 17, 18, but his concern is very different. The passage runs: *Love is complete* (τετελείωται) *with us when* (ἵνα, as in John xv. 8) *we have absolute confidence* (παρρησίαν) *about the day of judgment* (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως), *since in this world we are living* (in love, or, in God) *as He* (ἐκεῖνος, Jesus Christ) *lives. Love has no dread* (φόβος) *in it; no, love in its fulness* (ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη) *drives all dread away, for dread has to do with punishment* (κόλασιν)—*anyone who has dread, has not reached the fulness* (τετελείωται) *of love.* The point of the passage is eschatological. The day of judgment comes, and all have to meet its searching test of love. Now, John's argument is that a life consciously and conscientiously lived in brotherly love need not have any misgivings about the day of judgment. Such a life, humbly and dutifully lived on the lines of the love enjoined and inspired by Christ, may have absolute confidence in view of the final scrutiny, since it is heartlessness that excludes from the presence of God. The fundamental principle of this reading of life is that what is punished is the callous heart; the deadly sin is selfish indifference to others in the Church. Which after all is the teaching of a parable like that of Luke xvi. 19 f. and of the forecast in Matthew xxv. 31 f.; only, in the latter passage it is deeds of humanity done by pagans to Christians without any consciousness that they are done to or for Christ, whereas in John, who has a definite circle of church people in view, it is conscious acts of mutual help and service, rendered because they are recognized to be the bidding of the Lord.

The Christian outlook, as put in this Johannine passage, is in fact the same as Luther's in the fourteenth of his Theses: "The imperfect soundness or love (*sanitas seu charitas*) of a dying person inevitably brings great fear; the less it is the greater is the fear."

Two linguistic points of detail are to be noted. First, φόβος is invariably used in a bad sense in John, never in the synoptic sense of 'reverence.' The allusions in the Fourth Gospel (vii. 13, xix. 38, xx. 19) are to the sense of terror or low apprehension; none includes the sense of religious awe. Then, the only other use of κόλασις happens to be in the very parallel passage of Matthew (xxv. 46). Even were ὁ φόβος κόλασιν ἔχει to be rendered 'fear checks development,' which is linguistically possible, the thought would remain substantially the same. But punishment or a punishing experience is not what the writer has in mind. It is plausible to understand punishment here as the salutary chastening that alarms and humbles the soul, so that fear would be a danger-signal, blest to the sufferer if obeyed. But 'punishment' does not carry a good sense in this paragraph, and although true it is irrelevant to interpret the argument in the light of Bengel's neat analysis of religious growth ("sine timore et amore, cum timore sine amore, cum timore et amore, sine timore cum amore").

The thought of the end had been already touched in ii. 28 f., where the writer appeals to his circle, *remain within him now, so that when he appears, we may have confidence instead of shrinking back from him in shame at his arrival*—as we must, if we are failing here and now in brotherly love. So watch your life. *As you know he is just, be sure that everyone who practises righteousness is born of him* and is therefore within the divine life, practising its principles, the chief of which is brotherly love (iii. 10, see above). It is from a slightly different angle that the prospect of the end is viewed in our present passage, where the thought is concentrated upon brotherly love. The writer puts his 'high' doctrine in unqualified terms, when he argues that misgivings can only arise from a failure to practise brotherly love; in other words, he suggests that it is only the unforgiving, selfish spirit which need have any fear or dread of the last judgment. One apostle had already pled, *love hides a host of sins* (see above, p. 240). Another writer had confidently cried, *the merciful life will triumph in the face of judgment; the judgment will be merciless to the man who has shown no mercy*, and to him alone. This confidence of James is echoed by John here, when he insists that a truly loving heart may have a quiet mind and a good conscience, as it anticipates the final judgment. *If in this world we are* indeed *living as he does*, loving one another as he has commanded us to do, it means that we are within his life. Such a life of love in this world is already 'in' the divine life, part of the divine reality, from which there is no fear that it can ever be separated. In fact, our dread of the last day may be said to be in proportion to our defects in this brotherly love; it is as pitilessness and heartlessness or any form of selfishness still clings to life, that we have reason to dread the final scrutiny of the loving God. But as love reaches its *fulness*, any cause for anxiety will disappear with the selfish tempers which bred it, till there ceases to be ground for dreading exclusion from the life divine. The loving spirit has no room for nervous fears about its personal destiny ; it knows that this, this life of love, is the most divine thing in the present world or in any other. The idea of the passage is that such an expulsion of dread about the future from life is the last and crowning touch put by love to its own work.

Such is the high and heroic teaching of John upon love in view of the last things. It is the sequel and climax to the entire teaching upon brotherly love. As Jesus had opposed trust to fear, so John opposes love to fear, love driving fear out of life, i.e. the fear of being rejected by God at the end. But the love that is thus left is reverent and dutiful, the very opposite of any presumptuous confidence or of any attempt to base hope on a meritorious record of charity.

This 'high' view easily assumed a crude form, as in the stress which the author of 2 Clement lays (xvi. 4) upon almsgiving in speaking of the imminent day of judgment, when the secrets and the open deeds of men shall be exposed : *almsgiving is good even as repentance for sin ; fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving is better than both . . . almsgiving proves the lightening of sin.* We have here a recrudescence of the exaggerated view of this virtue, which in the later Judaism, from Sirach onwards, made charity or almsgiving so characteristic a function of the pious life that it sometimes became not only a feature of the 'imitatio Dei,' but a means of acquiring merit. The generic term *righteousness* (δικαιοσύνη) was used for this charity or almsgiving, as indeed it is once by Paul (2 Corinthians ix. 6–10) in a popular application of Psalm cxii. 9, where the apostle is encouraging the Corinthians to be generous in their charities, by assuring them that such bountiful actions, answering to the bountiful, generous nature of God Himself, will be rewarded by God with ever richer bounty from His hand. But there is no eschatological application here. The apostle would have been the last to insinuate that charity was a merit, on which man could base any claim for the divine approval at the end. Still, he is free to recognize that such practical expressions of human affection are inspired and rewarded by God, with whom it is more blessed to give than to receive. This is natural and thoroughly Christian. But to stiffen such a thought into the doctrine that almsgiving as such could be reckoned upon to make up for the inevitable defects of character at the last judgment was to caricature the fine principle of this Johannine argument.

The religious problem of fear in the sense of uneasiness and anxiety is really raised and answered in an earlier passage where 'fear' is never mentioned and where the outlook is not eschatological. After urging Christians to put their love into deeds and make it real, the writer continues (iii. 19 f.): *thus it is that we may be sure we belong to the truth and reassure ourselves before him whenever our heart condemns us ; for God is greater than our heart, and he knows all. If our heart does not condemn us, beloved, then we have confidence in approaching God, and we get from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commands and do what is pleasing in his sight. Now this is what he commands, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he has commanded us to do ; he who obeys his commands remains within him—and he* (αὐτός, God) *remains within him.* The self-accusations here are on the score of the brotherly love commanded by God, which, as stated by Jesus Christ, is found to be a trying rule for ordinary life. A truly conscientious Christian, who is sincerely doing his best to overcome selfishness and to show love to God by loving his fellows, may reassure himself by reflecting, like Peter, *Lord, you know everything, you can see I love you.* He may be mindful of his failures, but as he knows he is not content with mere expressions of sympathy with the suffering, as he is conscious of a sincere effort to obey the command of brotherly love, he can appeal humbly and confidently to God's understanding of his true bent, amid all that may seem inconsistent and defective. This quiet, serene confidence is based on obedience to God's command of belief in the Lord Jesus (see above, pp. 297 f.), no less than on brotherly love as its essential correlative; but the practical emphasis falls on the expression of obedience to the latter as the spirit which gradually eliminates anxious fear from the heart, since its controlling motives are open—

> In His unerring sight, who measures life by love.

CONCLUSION

WHAT makes the first century of our era so significant for Christianity is not that certain high and noble statements were made about love, human and divine, but that they were made by One who did more than utter them. The gospels tell of what *Jesus began both to do and to teach*, and they were written by and for churches which realized that his Spirit had created a fellowship in history where such spiritual ends of love as he had revealed were to be more than words. This is where the real originality of love, as shown in the NT, lies. For Jesus, words about the loving spirit of God and of man were but one expression of the power and will of love that inspired his mission to the world. When those writers who spoke most directly about the love of God desired to bring out its burning centre, they did not dwell simply upon the gracious character of Jesus nor upon his generous words, but on the life that culminated in his death as a sacrifice of love for the sins of men. *God proves his love for us by this, that Christ died for us when we were still sinners. . . . This is how the love of God has appeared for us, by God sending his only Son into the world, so that by him we might live.* The teaching of Jesus upon the loving temper was indeed too striking to be forgotten ; but it was remembered as an expression of his personality and as the principle which he laid down for his followers ; he had acted upon it himself, and so were they to act in their own measure, they for whom God's love as shown in Jesus Christ was creative of character before it was an example for conduct. The teaching and practice of the primitive Church on love is inexplicable as the result of any concentration upon one or two maxims of the Galilean prophet, apart from the entire significance of his life and death and resurrection. If there is one thing historically certain about the Christian traditions of the first century, it is this, that the conceptions of love which thrilled and challenged the churches were not due to the recollection of some fair words spoken by One whose tragic fate was out of relation to his teaching. They were not ideas of a noble moralism for which the life of the Master might serve as a useful illustration and no more, as was the life of Socrates for a teacher like Epictetus. It was not on any devout impressionism that the Church throve, as though it lived and moved by adherence to a Jesus-cult, or by recollections of a few fine maxims dropped casually by One who had left them to be carried out anyhow by susceptible souls in the world round the Mediterranean basin. Whether the Church called itself the Body of Christ or the Building or the Bride, it knew that it owed its existence to the Lord of Love himself, who had been sent from God to carry out a purpose at the heart of which love throbbed. The one explanation for their life of which they were conscious lay in the love revealed by this God, and they instinctively believed that the sole hope and strength for acting up to the principle of love thus manifested lay in the final and full disclosure of it through Jesus Christ the Son of God. The *new command* of love *is true* (*realized*) *in Him and also* (and therefore) *in yourselves*, as one writer put it; the source of love as well as the standard of it was sought and found in what the Church owed to God who had drawn near to their life in Jesus Christ. Hence the consciousness that they were living not in the after-glow of a beautiful ideal which had once arisen spontaneously in the world, but in the dawn of the Day of God—*because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining*, a light not made with hands.

The varied expressions of this faith in the NT point to the invariable sense that such a nexus is essential, if love is not to be irresponsible and ineffective. The very warmth of religious experience as an experience of the divine love may produce an intrinsic selfishness, either a preoccupation with oneself as the most interesting figure in the world, or an ascetic austerity which stands apart from human intercourse as interfering with the loving contemplation of God. The former temptation is commonly no more than a phase through which the believing man passes, a phase which in the religious consciousness of love corresponds to the naïve engrossment of lovers in themselves. The other may become a permanent handicap, however, simply because devout souls are capable of mistaking it for a virtue. To free oneself from distractions is indeed a method of true religion, and the NT shows how carefully primitive Christians were trained to avoid intercourse that might stain or slacken their lives. Meditation and private devotion were inculcated. But this is one thing, and to permit love for God to dry up the natural affections is another thing altogether. When Santa Teresa had her first experience of the ecstatic trance, she tells us that she seemed to hear a voice bidding her, "I will not have thee converse with men, but with angels." The word was fulfilled, she adds. "For never have I been able to form friendship with, nor have any comfort in, nor any particular love for, any persons whatsoever, except those who, as I believe, love God and try to serve Him. It is nothing to me that they are my kindred and my friends, if I do not know them to be lovers of God or persons given to prayer." She confesses indeed that it was always a cross to her to have any intercourse with anyone. Santa Teresa was better than her word, in this respect. Otherwise her religion would have resembled a Christianized version of the old Indian sect which bade its devotees, "Place your affection on nothing; a monk who loves not even those who love him will be freed from sin and hatred."[1] Such renunciation even in its extreme and morbid forms has indeed a lesson for those who yield to passion and distraction in the business of the world—

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[1] Uttarādhyayana, viii. 2 (*Sacred Books of the East*, xlv.).

> Out of these convertites
> There is much matter to be heard and learned ;

but not the root of the matter, unless the NT is all astray. In its pages we repeatedly meet the reminder that, whilst God's love must be the personal experience of the individual, if he is ever to practise love to his fellows, on the other hand the valid conception of God's redeeming love leads to mutual love, either as devotion to the ends of God in human personality, or, if we choose to put it so, as the effort to love others for the sake of God. This implies the resolve to see them as God sees them. *The brother for whom Christ died* was the supreme appeal of the apostle, when he was urging consideration and unselfishness in the Church. To see the life of such, and indeed of anyone, in the light of God's purpose, and to act towards them accordingly, without cynicism or harshness or indifference, to believe in them, to treat them with patience and pity, is what we mean by loving them for the sake of God. An intelligent sympathy with His will which takes this form is at once the surest way of showing our real affection for Him and also the obvious method of fulfilling our duty towards one another. In the New Testament, the fuller understanding of God invariably opens up into a life of increased thoughtfulness and human service, whilst on the other hand it is by the steady practice of brotherly love alone, even for those who are defective in belief as well as in conduct, that believers can hope to verify the truth of God Himself. When the Russian lady in Dostoieffsky's novel asks the monk how she may become certain of her faith, the reply is that one is only sure of faith by means of "the experience of active love. Strive to love your neighbour actively and indefatigably. In so far as you advance in love, you will grow more convinced of the reality of God and of the immortality of your own soul. If you attain to perfect self-forgetfulness in the love of your neighbour, then you will believe with never a doubt, and no doubt can possibly enter your soul. This has been tried. This is certain." It was tried and proved true in these first days of the Church which the NT reflects and records. The very temptation to think otherwise, which has so often deflected Christian love, even when ardent votaries were endeavouring to cherish it, is explicitly set aside in these early transcripts of religious experience within the Community of God.

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Sympathy and the imagination born of sympathy are requisite to a real knowledge of persons, if that is to be more than what we call judgment of character. In order to understand others, in order to take a genuine interest in their aspirations and handicaps, in order to possess insight into their hopes and weaknesses, affection is needful; otherwise one remains on the outside, and the truest help cannot be rendered. It does not require religion, indeed, to prove that selfishness is a blinding force in life, or to show that anyone who makes self the main end is missing more than half the wealth of meaning in the world of men. "We cannot know the varied elements of value in the lives of others and in the possibilities of our own, save as our affections are strong. Every narrowing of love, every encroachment of egoism, means just so much blindness to the good."[1] Christianity taught this, as Judaism had already done, but taught it in a way of its own. It showed that real love of others implied a quick perception of the capacities and responsibilities opening up before human character, as the end of human character was revealed in the saving purpose of God for the world; whatever was opposed to love, the spirit of selfishness and greed and cruelty, the willingness to enjoy life at

[1] Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 423.

the expense of others, in short, all that was summed up in the term 'hate,' was pronounced a dark and darkening attitude, which incapacitated men from understanding either human or divine life altogether. This is not a merely moralistic judgment, however. When we interpret the religious literature of the NT historically, we discover that it is artificial to detach the so-called ethical teaching of Jesus from his religious message; the tradition of the gospels holds both together in a vital unity. For example, the moral of the Story of the Three Travellers, as we ought to call the parable of the Good Samaritan, is not that humane, charitable feeling constitutes the essence of the gospel, but that love to one's neighbour is not to be restricted to those who happen to share our religious beliefs at every point. There is a lack of love in asking how often one must forgive or whom one needs to help. Jesus said, *Go thou and do likewise*. But this injunction applies to the second of the supreme commands, love to one's neighbour; such love is assumed to be part and parcel of the religion which binds upon life the primary obligation to love God. Similarly, it was because the apostle Paul had in his own experience found life recast by a power of God which throbbed with love, that he set himself to verify the power of love in relation to his fellow-men; for him, what evoked and sustained love was the Spirit of the same God. It is only to put the same truth in a different fashion, when another writer pleads that mutual love in the Church of God is the natural expression of what God has done for Christians. In the epistle John does not use the idea of the Spirit in this connexion, as we have already seen, but he is equally certain in his own way that no love has any vitality about it which is not the product of religion. The phrasing differs, for where Jesus in the synoptic tradition uses the idea of the Reign or Realm of God, John prefers upon the whole to speak of the Family or Household of God; yet what underlies and issues from the synoptic tradition is the same truth as John presents from another angle, when he argues that anyone born of God, regenerated by the Father, instinctively loves those who belong to the same Household. This is put in the epistle, in one of the condensed sentences which are charged with the secret forces that shaped life in the early communities: *this is how we are sure that we love God's children, by loving God and obeying his commands* (*for love to God means keeping his commands*). *And his commands are not irksome*, not a strain upon our nature, as though we were being asked to do something foreign to ourselves, *for whatever is born of God conquers* (νικᾷ) *the world*, i.e. the world of scepticism and selfishness arrayed against the loving spirit of obedience and service. Round the Church ardent votaries of Isis and Sarapis were chanting their enthusiasm for the victorious faith of such deities: "Isis conquers," "Sarapis conquers all," "Hail to unconquerable Isis," and so forth.[1] It was in presence of these glowing hopes that the Church proclaimed faith in the gospel of Love. But of love in no syncretistic or cosmopolitan form. *Our faith*, i.e. faith that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, *that is the conquest which overcomes the world.* There are hard things in Christianity, as the NT admits, but the really hard things are those which are hard to undertake rather than those which are hard to understand. And we are told that there is a calling or position, that of faith and love, where the commands of God, culminating in brotherly love, become as it were a second nature; that in the life regenerated by God there is born a divine power which in the nature of things is certain to triumph over the lower antagonisms of hatred. It is vital and victorious. Those who hold their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who believe in God as revealed in him, have behind them a moral force which overcomes any reluctance or opposition within themselves or in the rough outward setting of their religion, till their endeavour to rise to the height of the love-command is like the tide—

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[1] *Isis invicta*, Ἶσις νικᾷ, πάντα νικᾷ ὁ Σάραπις, are common upon amulets and elsewhere, as the war-cries of these popular cults; see Otto Weinreich's *Neue Urkunden zur Sarapis-Religion* (1919), pp. 21, 33 f.

> Which rises to the level of the cliffs
> Because the wide Atlantic rolls behind.

Such is the confidence entertained by the writers of the NT, in confronting their world. It rests on definite belief, belief in a revelation made by God. There is no notion of brotherly love being a fine intuition or ideal, deduced from observation of human nature, or generated by earnest souls striving to keep themselves warm in a chilly universe. On the contrary, a valid belief in God is presupposed, not simply in the unity of God nor even in His unwavering will of good, but in His manifestation through Jesus Christ.

Here the test and task of commending such a gospel met the Church. The early Christians had to state and re-state the truth which afterwards was called 'the Incarnation,' and to live the life of love which that involved. In the NT we already notice the attempts to present the belief in Jesus as divine by which Christianity stands or falls, attempts which were generally drawn out by speculative efforts to abate the full truth of God *manifest in the flesh*. The Church saw that while such efforts might honestly aim at promoting brotherly love, they were really cutting its root in the divine revelation. But, together with this apologetic activity of thought, there went the sense that love divine was more than an article of the faith; it had, as it were, to be incarnated in the body of the living Lord, in the common life of the fellowship, if belief was to be truly held and to be telling on the outside world. For there were already Christians prone to accept the belief and failing to live up to the love which it implied as the spirit of brotherhood. Both of these lines, the theoretical and the practical, are indicated in the sources which we have been surveying.

The gospel, said Ignatius,[1] for all its antecedents in the OT religion, *has something special*, an unique quality. He instantly defines it as *the advent of the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, his passion, and the resurrection.* This is how the early Christians expressed the distinctive feature of their faith, marking it off from either Judaism or any pagan cult. Theirs was a fellowship created and inspired by the Spirit of the living Lord, a fellowship which had an open secret, open to all men; it was the open secret of a God who loves and who had suffered in love for His own. Therein they saw the reality and hope of life, bound up with the revelation of *one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, One who as man and as divine was *able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through him.* Instinctively they clung to this truth as their identity, declining to allow it to be fused with any contemporary religious movement on a lower level or to be pared away in the interests of alliance with any neology or semi-Christian philosophy of the day. The divine love which it enshrined came out in a love for one another which was devotion to the ends of God in human personality, as we have seen. That is, it was specifically religious, since the basis of the brotherly affection lay in the value of personal life revealed through the sacrificial love of the Lord. Belief in personality, linked to service of others for the supreme ends of the soul, breathed in the fellowship. It required patience, thought, imagination, forbearing pity, a strong sense of justice, self-control, and loving insight, but these ethical qualities in the discipline and instruction of the communities were elicited by a steady conception of the religious revelation behind them. They were fruits which, the early Christians believed, could only be grown from the roots of belief in that *specific something* to which Ignatius refers. When members of these religious communities or fellowships spoke of 'love,' it was as they thought of the Lord in whom they saw God's love for them and from whom they learned, as they could not learn otherwise, to love one another on earth, during the brief interval before this Lord returned from heaven to finish what he had begun. Not that love was merely the provisional rule for life during the interval; it was the principle and spirit of all their hopes for life eternal. What had created their fellowship with God and one another was love, and the fulfilment of their hopes was a relationship in which love would be perfected. This is distinctive, in the sense that it cannot be paralleled in messianic Judaism nor in the mystery-cults. Occasionally a noble saying is to be found in contemporary Judaism or in pagan ethics which casts light upon the spirit of brotherly love and even of divine pity; but the full nexus of God's outpouring love, awakening man's response in adoration of the Saviour and in brotherly love, is far beyond any syncretistic religion of the age. Historically it is most important to notice that the brotherly love of the primitive Churches was something very different from a mere response of the individual to the group in which he happened to find himself. They drew together because they were conscious of having been drawn by God to Himself. As we have repeatedly had occasion to notice, love in the NT is only understood as the function of cohesive and maturing life in a community, where such love is one vital part of the relationship between the Lord and the People, neither a discipline which may be ignored with impunity by any member in the supposed interests of devotional rapture, nor an extra which is of subordinate importance, nor again a valuable element which may be detached, without loss, from its context of faith and belief. The Church was a fellowship or an organism, not created by the will and cooperation of a number of individuals, but brought into existence by the loving will of the Father and trained by Him to live up to the principles of His own life. It was very far from resembling an ethical society or a humanitarian league or an association formed to advance the cult of exotic, well-meaning ideals about brotherliness and goodwill, as though these arose from a sort of spontaneous generation in the social mind and were intended to be applied indiscriminately to all and sundry in the wide world of men. On the horizon of the NT no hope dawns that is not the outcome of faith and belief in what God has done and in what He is, through Jesus Christ His Son. The horizon has widened since the first century; but while even within the limits of the NT itself there are already signs of a wider view than the primitive apocalyptic estimate of history, with its restricted outlook on the social order, there are no signs that any change took place in the conviction that genuine love grows out of faith; the fundamental truth about Christian love is that it must be interpreted as it must be inspired by the action and attitude of God which has been disclosed in Jesus Christ. The living task of the Church is, therefore, to become more than ever conscious itself, and to make outsiders conscious, of all that is involved in the revelation that calls forth this faith. To fall short of this would be to defraud men of what they have the right to expect and receive from the Church of God. *Man shall not live by bread alone.* Starving people have to be fed, indeed. The NT incessantly urges such practical duties of love upon its members; it will not recognize any spiritual claim to the love of God which ignores the claims of hungry or of sick people to charitable help. Yet to confine the task of the Church to this or to any other form of social service would be to give a stone instead of bread. The human soul needs more than outward aid to the body; and if it does not realize this, it is the duty of the Church to rouse such a belief. Care for physical well-being is one unfailing test and task of Christian love, but it is by no means the exclusive or the final form. The NT begins and ends with the conviction that those who experience the love of God possess something which is for themselves far more than food and raiment, and which therefore, as experience and as belief, must be passed on to others. This is the supreme service, no matter what other charities may be bestowed.

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[1] *Philad.*, ix. 2.

It has been already made plain that the NT contains no consciousness of the problem which emerges later, viz. the question whether man may not be good and loving without God, i.e. without any conscious belief in God. The NT writers are vexed and perplexed by the problem of godly people who are inhuman and inhumane, but not by the problem of human creatures, kindly and self-sacrificing, who are ungodly, in the sense of ignoring religion. Yet the teaching on love shows that the NT writers shrank in horror from any view of religion which undervalued belief. From that they recoiled, as though it non-suited faith. Religion was to speak *de Deo*, or it was nothing. It was the gnostic effort to conceive of Christ inadequately which roused the Johannine writer, simply because that, in his view, meant an imperfect hold upon God. From this it may be inferred, though the inference was not explicitly drawn, that the NT excluded views of spiritual progress which make man aware of himself, of his own capacities and ideals for love or anything else, as though these were everything. It believed that in religion man came face to face with a Reality in which he found his life fulfilled. The end was not that a man should have commerce with his own thoughts of brotherly love, but communion with a God whose life evoked and directed such love through Jesus Christ. And, as we have further seen, this ruled out any notion of transcendental love for God as illuminism. The religious life expected in NT ethic was not derived from a passion for the Absolute or for the divine Abyss or for union with Being as such or for harmony with the cosmic principle of the universe. Against the dissipation of religion into philosophy, which is and was fostered by mystical movements as well as by abstract speculation, the NT is a standing protest with its teaching upon what love truly means for God and man.

The study of comparative religion shows that when the reality of history is depreciated, the reality of the moral life is apt to diminish, i.e. the moral life in personality. It is the sense of this which underlies the NT insistence upon such love as not of man's contriving, but as the product of the divine will acting in history and expressing itself in the creation of a community before which there lay a future in the divine purpose fully disclosed by Jesus Christ. To believe this, to become conscious of all that this involved, was deemed essential.

To sum up, then. At the outset we expected to discover in what sense Christianity, as depicted in the literature of the NT, may be called a religion of love; the emphasis fell on the term 'love,' our primary aim being to ascertain how far it is true to say that love is distinctive of the Christian faith, and, if so, to what extent this characteristic feature of the religious movement was able to express itself in word and fact. But in the course of our study we have encountered another aspect of the subject, which only becomes visible to those who study Christian love from the inside. It is this, that Christianity was originally understood by its adherents to be a religion of love, the emphasis now falling on the term 'religion.' Hedonists and humanitarians had claimed in their respective fashions that 'love is God, or god,' as their modern representatives still, like the Pelagians in the ninth Article of the English Church, "do vainly talk," avowing that this love is the one thing in the wide world which they are prepared to label as divine. But Christians in the first generation had not so learned their lesson. From the first, as we have seen, their reading of life was more profound. In history and experience we observe this community or company moving forward as they believe and receive the love God has for them. It is a conviction which may be and has been either diluted or over-heated, but it is one of the unfailing notes of personal identity by means of which the student of religion is able to know the Church when he sees it. According to the NT the Church began (and if it fails to continue thus, it soon will end) by confessing *God is love*, but only in the spirit of adoring reverence which inspired the song of praise *to Him who loves us and has loosed us from our sins by shedding his own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever: Amen.*

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